The National
Future Farmer

Published by the Future Farmers of America

August/September, 1983

INSIDE THIS ISSUE: To Farm Or Not To Farm
Sturgeon's Rainbow

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A Word With The Editor

These are uncertain times for American agriculture. The PIK program may offer short-term relief for some farmers but no long-term solution has yet been proven. Increased exports will help if we can develop adequate markets throughout the world for our surplus products. Once again the American farmer is the victim of his own efficiency. He simply produces more than we can consume in this country. It may take years to work ourselves out of the present surplus situation but many experts feel the long range outlook for agriculture is good because of the population growth expected throughout the world.

For many FFA members, this presents a question: "To Farm or Not To Farm: Is there still a choice?" The article on page 24 deals with this question from a historical viewpoint with a future outlook.

You will also find a western flavor to this issue. "He's Off and Running" refers to Tom Sturgeon, the national horse proficiency winner. You can also read about Casey Fortune, a modern-day cowboy who is as much at home in a rodeo as he is on the range.

One of the strengths of vocational agriculture is its diversity. As a result, FFA members get "hands-on" experience and skills under a wide range of programs. This issue has two features which are perfect examples: James Sturgeon, who lives in the mountains and helps his dad run a fish hatchery; and Dwain Adams, who helps manage what may be the world's largest silver fox ranch.

"Reduced Tillage: The Wave of the Future," deals with a subject you will be hearing more about in years ahead because it helps with both soil and energy conservation. And for you chapter reporters and others who look for an ag career off the farm, our career series takes up the subject of ag journalism.

Wilson Carnes

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Cover: *Cover Photo by Michael Wilson*

It seems horse lovers can be found anywhere and anytime, but especially during the warm, hazy days of summer. Our cover for this issue features Cecile Simmons, an FFA member from Archer, Florida. Cecile was the FFA's horse proficiency winner from the Southern Region last year.

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The FFA
News in Brief

TELEVISION AND FILM STAR Eddie Albert speaks out for vocational agriculture in a recently-finished FFA public relations campaign which will air nationwide during national FFA WEEK next year. The campaign includes public service announcements, the annual theme show and FFA WEEK materials. The campaign was previewed recently at the annual State Presidents' Conference this July, and is sponsored by the General Fund of the National FFA Foundation, Inc. Watch for more details in future issues.

DR. OWEN J. NEWLIN, vice president of Pioneer Hi-Bred International, Inc., was named the National Agri-Marketer's Association 1983 Agri-Marketer of the Year at NAMA's annual meeting held this spring. Dr. Newlin served on the FFA Foundation Advisory Board, was a member of the Board of Trustees and in 1981 served as chairman of the National FFA Foundation Sponsoring Committee.

THE FFA BOARD of Directors ushered in two new voting members for their July Board meeting. Don E. Wilson, state FFA advisor from California, succeeds Oklahoma state Advisor Ralph Dreesen. C.W. Reed, state advisor from Alabama, succeeds Dr. Curtis Corbin, Jr., state FFA advisor from Georgia.

DESPITE THE ROUGH FARM economy the National FFA Foundation reports more and more ag businesses who now support the FFA as new Foundation sponsors. New general fund sponsors include Payless Cashways, Inc., and PPG Industries Foundation. New Special Project sponsors include: Klein Tools, Inc.; Nursery Supplies, Inc.; Esmark, Incorporated Foundation/Swift & Co.; International Minerals & Chemical Corp.; Nursery Supplies, Inc.; Red Brand fence (made by Keystone Steel & Wire Co.); the Jerome Foundation and Estech, Inc., who will support the FFA through the 1984 FFA WEEK program.

"CONVENTION TIME: That Special Feeling," is a new 30-minute film sponsored by the Coca-Cola Company through the National FFA Foundation, Inc. The film captures the spirit of the National FFA Convention through a documentary style, using viewpoints from FFA members, advisors, contest judges and guest speakers as they participate in the National FFA Convention, which is held each November in Kansas City, Missouri. The film is narrated by past National FFA Officer David Pearce, and was a three-year project of Venard Films Ltd. For more information write to: Venard Films Ltd., Box 1332, Peoria, IL 61601.

SECRETARY OF EDUCATION Terrel Bell and Secretary of Agriculture John Block were present at the U.S. Department of Agriculture during this year's Agriculture Day, to mail an "Agriculture In America's Classrooms" Governor's Proclamation to all the nation's governors. The proclamation was signed by all living former Secretaries of Agriculture and promotes programs like Food For America in elementary schools.

Sixty-one FFA members participating in the WEA (Work Experience Abroad) class departed in June for 3-, 6- and 12-month stays in 14 European countries, New Zealand and Japan. Two more groups are scheduled to depart in late August.

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Trends in Agriculture

Looking Ahead

100 BUSHEL WHEAT? That's the goal of researchers at Arkansas' Agricultural Experiment Station in Fayetteville, Arkansas, and the scientists may reach their goal sooner than you think. "We know it can be done," says Dr. Fred Collins, University of Arkansas agronomist. "To maximize yields we are combining technology from the area of breeding, soil fertility, plant pathology and entomology." Although 1982 U.S. wheat production was a record 35.1 bushels per acre—far from 100 bushels per acre—average yields in the United States have been slowly rising over the past fifty years.

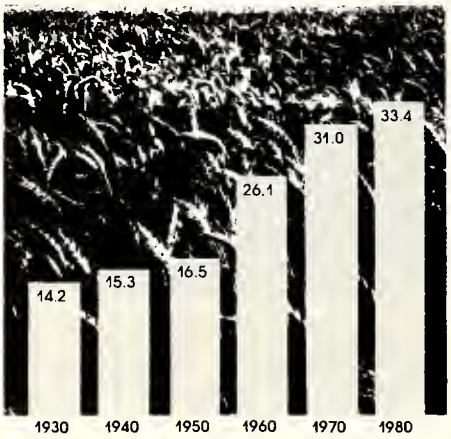

Illustration courtesy Mead Paper

U.S. wheat yields have increased over the last 50 years.

PEOPLE ARE PAYING more for domestic farm food, but the farmer's share is getting smaller and smaller. In 1982 U.S. consumer expenses were a record $298 billion, up 5 percent from the year before. Of this total, farmers received $84 billion—about 28 cents of each food dollar—while $214 billion, or 72 cents, went to cover transporting, processing and distributing foods to consumers.

DOG TAGS FOR MILK COWS? For busy farmers, knowing exactly how much milk each cow produces daily is the key to better herd management. And the job of identifying each cow in a large herd is virtually impossible. But now Cornell University researchers have developed two electronic devices to solve both problems. These gadgets, which look like electronic "dog tags" attached to the cow's neck chain, weigh only a few ounces and are computer programmed. As each cow moves into the milking parlor the gadgets send signals to a nearby receiver which relays the cow's code to a microcomputer. The device which measures a cow's milk output can also relay the figures to a microcomputer—causing a computer printout to show which cow produces exactly how much milk during each milking session.

THE COMPUTER REVOLUTION is underway in American agriculture, but it's only taken its first wobbly steps, according to a report from an Iowa State University research team. Only 3 percent of the Iowa farmers responding to a 1982 survey say they are currently using microcomputers to help make operating decisions. However, 17 percent say they are planning to buy a microcomputer for their farming operation. Fifty-seven percent say they haven't given a microcomputer any serious thought, and 23 percent of the farmers thought about it—but rejected the idea.

REFUELING TRACTORS is a daily job on most farms, and one that can easily be taken for granted. Here are some safety tips passed on by the National Safety Concil's *Agri-Safety Newsletter:*

- Turn off the engine, and if hot, allow it to cool before refueling.
- Put out your smoke; it could ignite any vapors or splashes.
- Remove the tank cap slowly, allowing any pressure to escape before taking it all the way off. Make sure cap venting or pressure release valve is clean and working.
- When the tank is nearing capacity, back off on the flow and avoid overfilling. Let the nozzle drip before removing it. Wipe up spills and let residue dry before restarting the engine.
- If you are doused with fuel, quickly get away from any ignition source. Remove fuel-soaked clothing and wash affected skin areas.

ALTHOUGH FARM MACHINERY sales plunged 30 percent and fertilizer sales dropped 11 percent between 1981 and 1982, pesticide sales dipped only 2 to 5 percent, according to a USDA report. The small pesticide decrease, compared to other farm input decreases, is attributed to farmers' reluctance to risk increased crop losses. U.S. pesticide use varies substantially among crops and regions: in 1981, wheat farmers spent an average $2.25 per acre for pesticides while peanut growers spent $79 per acre. Outlook for increased pesticide use is optimistic due to increased use of minimum and no-tillage practices.

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The Mailbag

Friendswood, Texas

I was very pleased with the article "What Does 'FFJ' Stand For?" on page 26 of the June-July issue. Until now I had no idea that there was an FFJ. It was very informative and I was glad to see our national officers working with the FFJ.

Auggie Mathis

Hartshorne, Oklahoma

I am a vo-ag teacher at Hartshorne and have taught with Mr. Howard Burger in a two-teacher department since July, 1964, for a total of 19 years. Mr Burger retired in June. We know we have the record in Oklahoma for years taught together and maybe the United States. We have never had an argument. By the way, do we have the longest tenure together in the U.S.? Maybe you could find out for us.

Mickey Nolen

We do not have such information here. Anyone who knows of a longer association could write to Mr. Nolen at the Hartshorne High School, Hartshorne, Oklahoma 74547.—Ed.

Minot, North Dakota

In reference to an article I read in the April-May issue (page 26) about leadership, I agree very strongly with the statement that Shirley Jones made that the goals you set for yourself are important. I too challenge all FFA members to set and accomplish their goals. I am looking forward to fulfilling my goal of being a WEA exchange student.

Taunia Martin

Riverton, Wyoming

I would like to commend you and the entire staff of *The National FUTURE FARMER* on the excellent issues you put out. I really enjoy reading the magazine.

I still have another year before I can join FFA but because of the magazine and the support of my brother Mike and his ag instructor Tad McMillan, I plan to join FFA.

I set my goal high and I hope to learn qualities of leadership and responsibilities.

Kim Fabrizius

Rossville, Georgia

I'm happy to receive *The National FUTURE FARMER* magazine. The best article I enjoyed was of Kenny Davis ("The Many Faces of Kenny Davis," Page 14, April-May, 1983). It lets me know, no matter what age you are, people have to listen to you if you make them understand what you're doing is for a good cause. I'm learning about FFA.

Kathy Skidmore

Kalamazoo, Michigan

Congratulations on the Future Farmer magazine, it's excellent.

As a former farm boy, FFA state degree winner, vo-ag teacher and FFA advisor and state 4-H president, I can see through your magazine that FFA is alive and well—thank God.

I strongly encourage each of you as friends of agriculture to learn all you can through FFA and its super activities. Those successful now and in the future will need the leadership, citizenship and practical skills you can gain now as vocational agriculture students and FFA members. Please do not waste the opportunity of a lifetime.

Dale M. Johnson
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Send letters or notes (be sure it's legible) with name, address and chapter to: MAILBAG, The National FUTURE FARMER, P.O. Box 15160, Alexandria, VA 22309. All letters are subject to editing.

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Wild About Wildlife

By Dianne L. Beetler

MATT Howard, an 18-year-old recent graduate of Knoxville, Illinois, High School, has no idea how many hours of work he has devoted to the wildlife area on his family's farm near Maquon, Illinois. It was enough time, however, to earn Matt the Illinois Proficiency Award for Fish and Wildlife Management last year.

Matt's father, Bill, formed the wildlife area several years ago, but when Matt became interested and decided to make it his FFA project, work progressed in earnest. The area consists of 40 acres of fenced land with four ponds, three man-made. Three miles of fence protect the area from livestock but provide no barrier to wildlife.

Matt Howard on land designated as a Giant Canada Goose Area.

Matt spent two years working on the project, which today furnishes a refuge for squirrels, deer, rabbits, oppossum, foxes, raccoons, wood ducks, mallards, geese, turtledoves and other wildlife. One way he established the area was through planting food for the animals.

"I planted food plots along strips of land next to the fences," says Matt. "I used a mixture of soybeans, corn, millet, sorghum and sunflowers. A couple years ago we started planting large sunflower plots for turtledoves."

One major goal of Matt's was to supply nesting places for various forms of wildlife. He made brush piles for rabbits and quail, and built wooden squirrel houses. But that was only the beginning of Matt's building ambitions: he also installed fiberglass wood duck nests in trees; he built two islands on a large pond to be used as nesting grounds by geese; and he also planted a large variety of fruit, nut and pine trees, as well as crown vetch as food and a good ground cover.

Although the Howards don't see their wildlife area as a paradise, it seems idyllic to some visitors. On a sunny summer day the insects drone, ducks swim quietly in the pond and green grass shines against bright blue skies. It's a peaceful refuge for people who enjoy the beauty of nature and wildlife—and Matt Howard is one of those people. •••

Matt checks one of several squirrel houses he built.

Photos by Author

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Sturgeon's Rainbow

This FFA member helps produce rainbow trout for the State Game and Fish Department at an isolated fish hatchery high in the mountains of Arizona.

AFTER wincing over what I hoped was the final jolt in our bumpy ride up the steep and winding mountain road, our weather-beaten van pulled itself to a halt at an isolated and snowy clearing.

It had been a 43-mile ride to our isolated mountain destination, and nestled there among the evergreens was a home, a few buildings—and what I *thought* were two simple recreational ponds. Later I found that these small lakes were the "confinement feedlots" of the subject of my story: 16-year-old James Sturgeon, an FFA member with a very unique "farming" operation.

My assignment today was to find out about an agricultural operation I knew little of: rainbow trout production. James, from the Payson, Arizona, FFA Chapter, works with his father Clovis Sturgeon here at Canyon Creek Hatchery. The hatchery is built on National Forest Service land and financed by the State Game and Fish Department.

As we pile out into the thin mountain air, James offers a simple comparison: "Basically, the fish hatchery here is like any other farm or ranch," he says with a smile. "You always have to have someone here to feed the animals—it's just that we do it in the water, not on land."

His description seems more than appropriate, just as the rugged mountain base where the Sturgeons' produce their "stock" seems apt as well. At 8,600-feet elevation, the only sound heard is the rushing water in the hatchery's breeding tank; lift your head upward and the only movement you might see is a passing cloud, or the peaceful glide of a bald eagle. Far from any smoke or city noise, this sparsely-populated region of the country seems ideally-suited to the natural resource work taking place.

Still, I was skeptical. In my ignorance, I figured there was probably nothing too complicated or difficult about feeding or growing a fish. Up until now, my only concern with rainbow trout was how it tasted on the dinner plate.

I found out quickly, though, that there was more to a fish hatchery than I had bargained for.

My education began with James explaining that production at the hatchery begins with boxes of eggs—up to 200 boxes with 300,000 eggs in each box. The boxes are shipped from Colorado at a cost of $6 to $7 per 1,000 eggs, and the eggs are kept in incubators until James or Mr. Sturgeon can detect the "eye" phase—when trout first get eyes and a body shape. The stock must be checked each day for fungus growth, which can wipe out an entire lot.

Mr. Sturgeon, manager of Canyon Creek Hatchery, says the trout are then put into a raceway filled with water two feet deep where they'll stay on the bottom and feed off a "built-in protein sack" naturally attached to the fish's body. This growing stage takes about four weeks, says James. "We have to use a petroleum product to force them up and give them feed once they're finished with the sack," he says. "You've got to teach them how to eat by constantly keeping food in front of them." During this stage, the fish must be fed every hour of the working day if they are to survive.

At the next stage, the "fingerlings" (two to five inches long) can be taken to stock a lake. The hatchery annually produces 1.5 million fingerlings to stock Arizona streams and lakes. But trout are not considered "catchables" until they

By Michael Wilson

Photos by Author

Clockwise from far left: feeding time begins with a quick flick of James' wrist; Payson Advisor Wendell Stevens, right, helps James check a female "brood trout; the Hatchery's raceway system used for younger fish; eggs are brought in to the Hatchery from another brood fish station; a close-up view of the feed which James says helps produce one pound of trout per one-and-a-half pounds of feed.

are nine inches long. In order for the hatchery to produce their annual 300,000 catchables, the fingerlings are sent on to be "fattened up" in feeding ponds.

James says the hatchery can produce one pound of fish for every one and a half pounds of feed. He demonstrates a typical feeding session by filling a scoop with feed and giving the contents a lightning-quick toss into one of the ponds. After a split second the dark water begins to flash, as thousands of rainbow trout peck at the fresh feed lying on the water's surface.

"There's a great demand for catchables," says Mr. Sturgeon. "With the trees, mountains and wildlife there are more people involved in recreation. Arizona has the second largest amount of fishing boats next to California. That's pretty impressive considering there are no large bodies of water in this state."

The hatchery also contains fish for breeding, explains James. In a very delicate and timely operation, the Sturgeons' must take eggs from the female trout by rubbing the fish's belly. The female eggs are placed in a pan with one male sperm and harvested once a year. The male sperm has only 10 seconds to fertilize before it dies, and the female egg is "open" to be fertilized for only three minutes.

"Right now we're taking a half-million eggs off our brood stock," says James. "We're able to produce these eggs at 90 cents per thousand, compared to $6 or $7 per thousand commercially. I'm shooting for enough brood stock to produce two million eggs." More eggs produced at the hatchery means less chance of bacterial disease from outside sources, which can be a severe problem for fish producers. Canyon Creek Hatchery lost 90 percent of its stock a few years ago due to a disease accidentally brought in from outside sources.

James' interest in wildlife led him to help conduct a resource project for the Forest Service, determining elk and bald eagle habits. The project has James working with wildlife biologists and Forest Service officials, tracking down and determining mountain areas where elk and bald eagles are found.

"Several students like James have projects like these," says Payson FFA Advisor Wendell Stevens. "It's all donated time. But in the long run he's getting paid back, because of the experience he'll have when it comes time to apply for a job." James has decided to pursue a career in wildlife management in the future, either in law enforcement or as a game warden.

He plans to enter the U.S. Army after high school in order to get outside skills, though, before any further training. "I'll almost have to have a college degree before I'll be able to reach my career goal," he says. But with such solid plans laid out before him combined with the experiences gained working at Canyon Creek Hatchery, James need not worry about the future.

Living and working in such a serene, peaceful setting, it's easy not to worry about anything. Caught up in my newfound knowledge of the fish hatchery business, I breathed one last gulp of mountain air before climbing into the van that would take me back to the Arizona deserts, just two hours away.

I would remember James and my visit to the other side of the rainbow the next time I sat down to a fillet dinner. •••

Reduced Tillage: The Wave

Experts say it's the fastest-growing idea to hit American farmers since hybrid corn 40 years ago. Even more exciting is how you as Future Farmers can try conservation tillage as a way to break into farming full-time.

BEGINNING farmers have looked high and low for ways to ease into the farming business. Now, it looks like one way to increase your chances of becoming established is by decreasing your trips across the field.

That's right: conservation tillage may be the break you need to become established in farming.

Let's back up for a minute. Of course farmers feel that soil erosion is a serious problem in American agriculture. But most farmers must see short-term economic benefits from conservation methods before they'll make more efforts to conserve. Most farmers believe soil erosion won't result in significant production cuts for 25 to 50 years. That's reason enough to put "more stewardship of the soil" off for another growing season.

But now all that is changing. And fast.

"I think in the next five years we're going to see an explosive growth in conservation tillage methods," says Neil Sampson, executive vice president of the National Association of Conservation Districts. Over 94 million acres of cropland in the United States were under some form of conservation tillage last year, according to the Conservation Tillage Information Center. That figure represents nearly 24 percent of total U.S. cropland. But even those figures don't tell the complete story.

According to *NO-TILL FARMER*, 35 percent of total tilled acres are now produced through some form of reduced tillage. No-till cropping practices have grown an estimated 260 percent since 1972, while minimum tillage has grown an equally impressive 335 percent.

It's a dramatic example of a new wave of farmers who view conservation tillage as a more profitable option—both in the short and long run—than conventional till. For FFA members who plan to make the jump into full-time farming, conservation tillage may be a choice to consider.

Over 95 million acres of cropland in the United States were under some form of conservation tillage last year. That figure represents nearly 24 percent of total U.S. cropland.

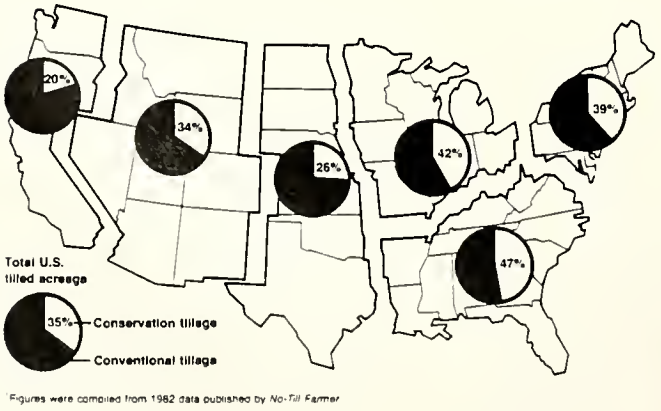
"There are some types of soil that aren't right for no-till," says 18-year-old FFA'er Todd Millar, "but if the ground is right for it, I'd say use it." A North Liberty, Indiana native, Todd currently serves as Indiana state FFA Secretary, and plans to pursue farming as a career. His family has practiced no-till methods for corn crops for the last five years now, and Todd says he plans to stick with it.

"Our farm's soil is what I call 'blow sand,' a sandy loam type soil. In our case we needed to look for a planting method that left enough residue on top to hold that moisture in," says Todd. "No-till has worked very well."

"From my own personal experience and from working in the conservation field for the last few years, in these times of marginal crop returns a young guy has a great shot at starting out in farming with few expenses through no-till," says James Lake, coordinator of the Fort Wayne, Indiana, Conservation Tillage Information Center.

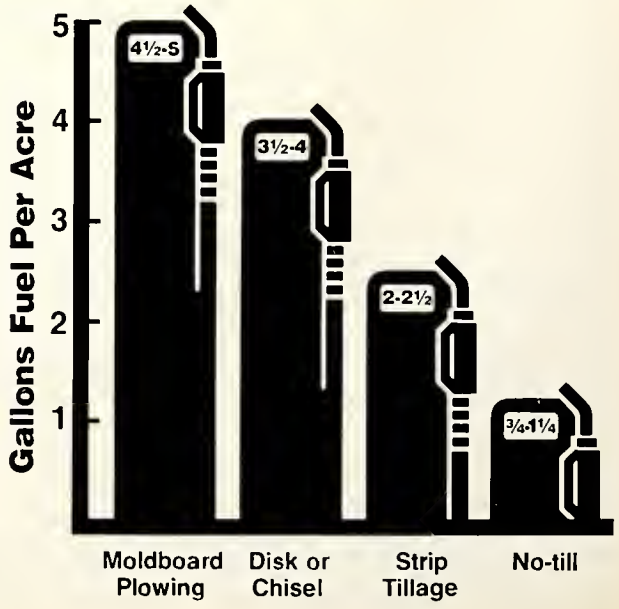
"It's a simplified example. Using only no-till, but the basic three implements he needs are a tractor, a no-till planter and a reliable sprayer for herbicides. Then he's in business, providing he hires

Conservation tillage is practiced on more than 40 percent of total *tilled* acreage in some regions. Twenty-four percent of all U.S. cropland is under reduced till methods.



Figures were compiled from 1982 data published by *No-Till Farmer*

A study by the University of Wisconsin concluded that moldboard plowing can consume 4¼ more gallons of fuel per acre than no-till planting, for example.



Of The Future

someone to harvest the crop for him.

"It certainly eliminates the need for a lost of those high horsepower implements," adds Mr. Lake. "I know from experience, because that's how my brother and I are breaking in right now."

Mr. Lake says he and his brother are using "ridge till" on a recently-purchased farm. After corn is harvested, soil goes untouched until spring.

"Then we come back in spring and plant right on the old rows. When the corn is 15 inches tall we take a ridge cultivator that throws dirt up on the bottom of the plants, forming a ridge between rows; again, we harvest in the fall and do nothing else."

The ridge allows the soil to warm and dry earlier than most conventional methods. "In spring we have no prior tillage. When it's time to go to the field, we go to the field and plant," says Mr. Lake.

Todd says initial costs for reduced-tillage planters will probably run higher than conventional-till equipment. "But you'll be ahead on all other pieces of equipment," says the FFA member.

A recent special issue of *Successful Farming* shows a machinery cost-comparison (including harvest equipment): for conventional tillage systems, average yearly ownership costs run $31,170, or $52 per rotated acre. That compares to a strip tillage system (seedbed prepared and planted in one operation, minimum tillage and a minimum of 50 percent previous crop residue left on the field) which averages $23,110 in annual ownership costs, or $38.52 per acre. A no-till system (seedbed prepared and planted in one operation, 90 percent previous crop residue left on the field) averages $23,220 in annual ownership costs, or $38.70 per acre.

Conservation tillage implies less trips across the field which saves soil, time, labor and fuel. But those savings can be endangered if top-notch soil and crop management skills aren't used.

But it's not only machinery costs that can be lower. Conservation tillage implies less trips across the field, which saves soil, time, labor and fuel. But those savings can be endangered if top-notch soil and crop management skills aren't used, especially when using herbicides for weed control. Reduced tillage systems are not as easy to manage as conventional tillage systems.

Mr. Sampson says farmers have two ways to raise profits: increase output (yields) or decrease input (costs).

"Farmers make management decisions on both cost and output sides of the business, but often it's those production costs where the few options exist," he says.

"A farmer doesn't have much option about how much he can grow, and the weather tells him when he can get in the field while the market tells him what price he gets," says Mr. Sampson. "The cost side is the only place where the farmer has any control. There's just no doubt that saving labor and time while cutting fuel costs is a pretty good option."

According to a *NO-TILL FARMER* survey, a no-till crop takes less than one gallon of fuel per acre to plant and spray, compared to a full tillage program which requires five to seven gallons per acre for soil preparation and planting. Subtracting the energy needed for extra

(Continued on next page)

New machinery and other farm inputs are being designed today specifically for reduced tillage methods. This mulch tiller helps heavy trash save soil and moisture.

This corn was planted using no-till methods in a double cropping system following a wheat harvest. Growing weeds were killed chemically at the time of planting.

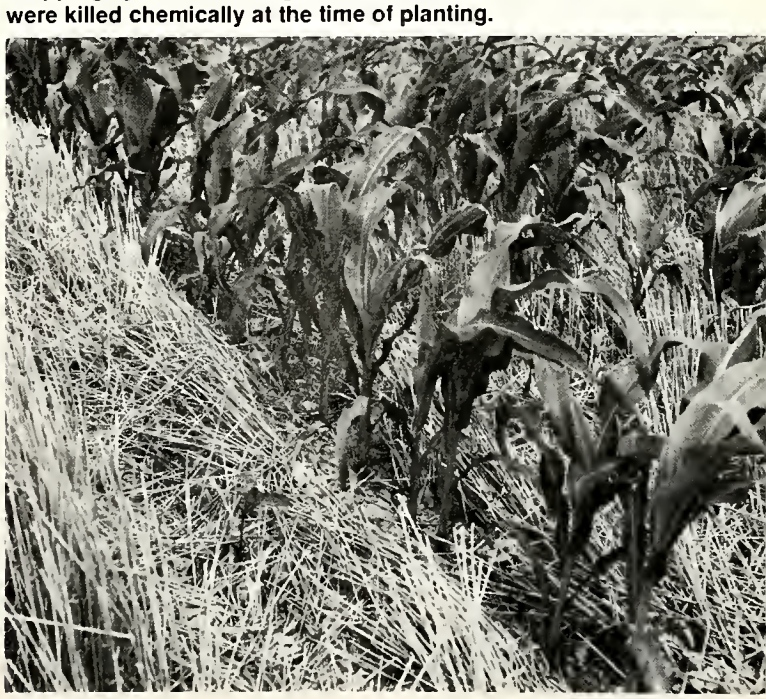


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Photo courtesy USDA

Above, signs promoting no-till are a common sight in some areas.

Minimum Till

(Continued from Page 15)

herbicides, a grower can still obtain a net savings of between four to seven gallons of fuel per acre with no-till.

What about yields? According to Mr. Sampson, better technology in conservation tillage equipment and other inputs has put yields on a competitive scale with conventional tillage. He says in the past, conservation tillage was used with conventional production tools. Now machinery companies, for example, are making lighter, wider and faster tillage implements specifically designed for reduced tillage.

"We're getting the right chemicals and pesticides, the right cultivators, the right breed of plants—it's taken years to get these new kinds of inputs, but now research is making it happen," says Mr. Sampson.

"A lot of farmers who are testing with conservation tillage are now finding that yields aren't necessarily lower, but are the same as conventional methods," he says. "Of course, some drop, but some are even higher. Some are finding yields can go up at the same time costs go down. And that's doubly nice."

Todd Millar reports his family farm had the highest proven acreage yield in the county last year—133 bushels per acre on a 283-acre corn test plot. "And we did that with no-till, a little irrigation and a lot of luck," smiles Todd.

The major thing that's holding conservation tillage back today is that it's different than what farmers are used to.

"If you're a conventional farmer with several thousand dollars worth of equipment, that's a problem. He's naturally going to be fairly slow about that," adds Mr. Sampson. "But if you're starting out fresh in farming, I would go down to the local conservation district and work through the economics."

Todd's district conducts yearly test plots using all kinds of reduced tillage methods. Many conservation districts such as Todd's buy equipment to lease short-term to farmers with limits of 30 acres so several growers can "try out" the new methods. At the end of the year equipment is auctioned off. "Usually one of the farmers who tries no-till comes back and buys it," says Todd.

It could be worth the effort. If conservation tillage continues to improve and keep costs down, it's sure to gain more and more acceptance as a viable way to produce. And it's one more option you'll have to consider as you make your decisions regarding your future in farming. •••

Have You Heard The Latest?

Reduced tillage methods are still foreign to many farmers as well as future farmers. But there are several sources of information available. The following list of sources may be of help to you as you search for answers regarding conservation tillage:

National Association of Conservation Districts: Conservation Tillage Information Center; P.O. Box 855; League City, Texas 77573 (Ask about their *Conservation Tillage News* Newsletter.)

No-Till Farmer, Inc. (A newsletter specifically about management techniques for no-till systems.) P.O. Box 624; Brookfield, Wisconsin 53005 (Ask about the booklet *"100 Most Commonly Asked Questions & Answers About No-Till Farming"*)

STUBBLECROPPER (A newsletter for reduced tillage systems in general.) Elanco Products Company; P.O. Box B—Station E; St. Joseph, Missouri 64505

Soil Conservation Society of America; 7515 Northeast Ankeny Road; Ankeny, Iowa 50021. •••

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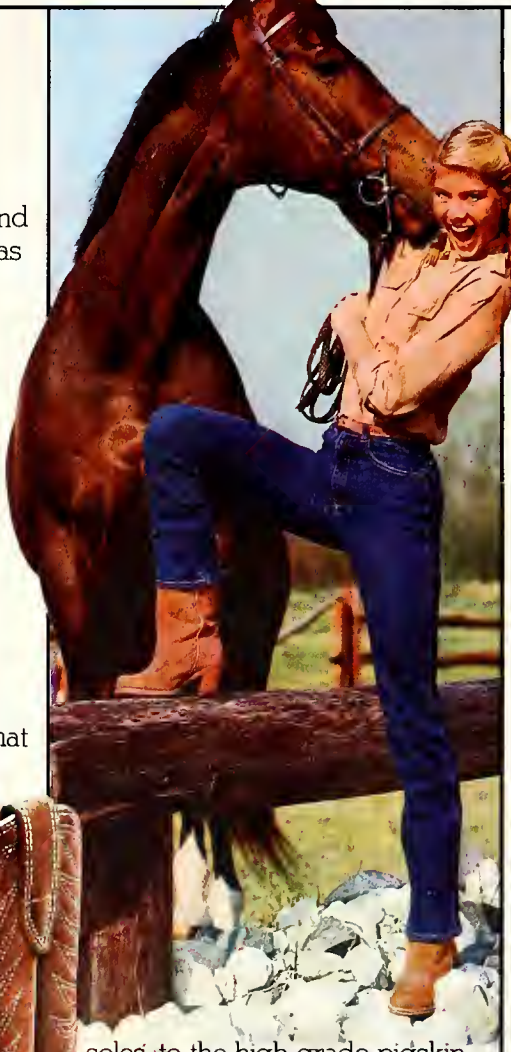

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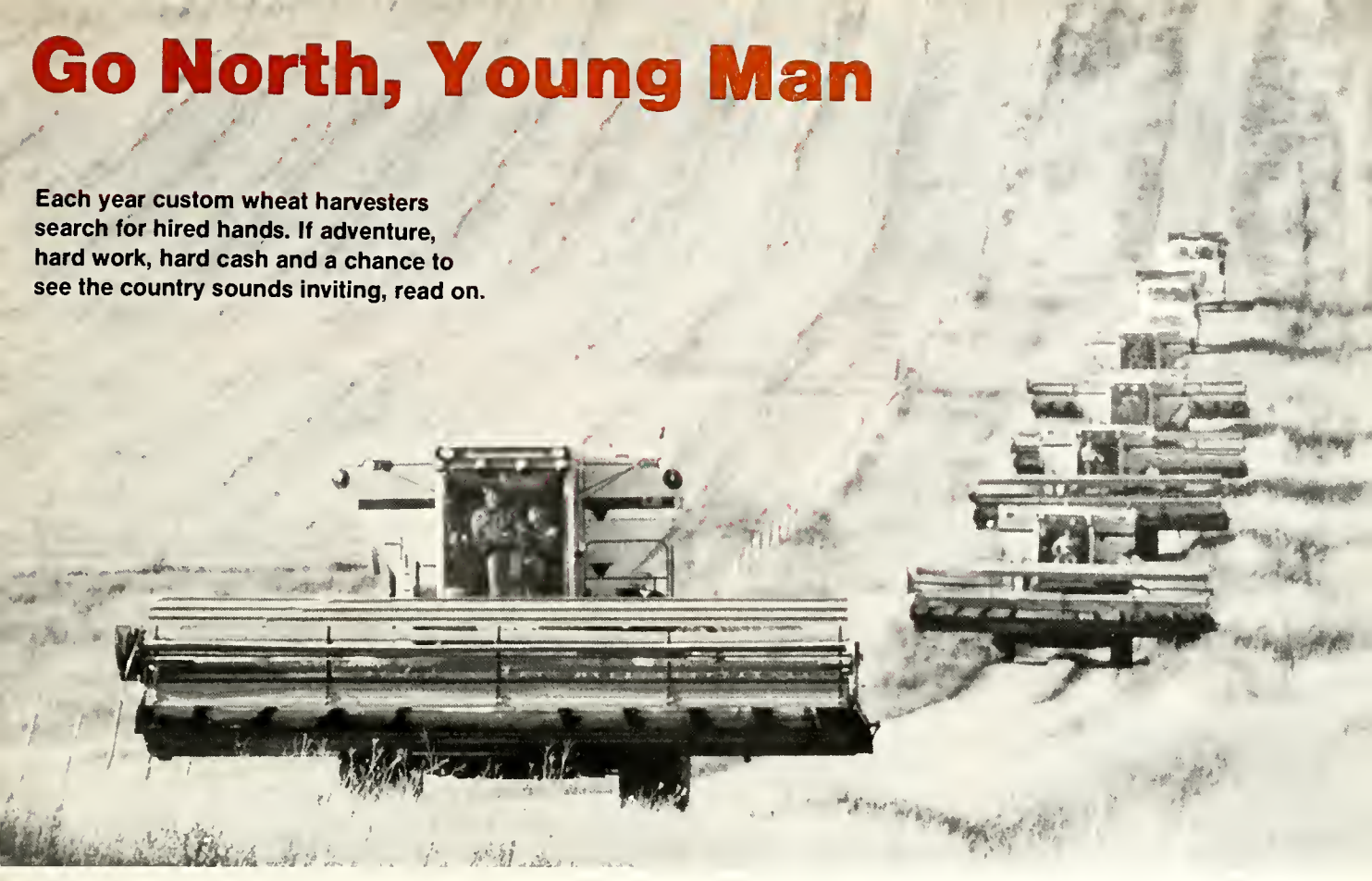
Go North, Young Man

Each year custom wheat harvesters search for hired hands. If adventure, hard work, hard cash and a chance to see the country sounds inviting, read on.



By Carole Owen

"Go North, Young Man" is advice Horace Greeley could give any FFA member searching for a lucrative summer job and a chance to see the country.

Every year the custom combiners who leapfrog with the wheat harvest from Texas through Oklahoma, Kansas, Nebraska, the Dakotas and into the Northwest look for hired hands with farm backgrounds.

Outfits like Harley and Russell Fry's of Wichita, Kansas, have been in the profession for decades. The Frys have taken at least 60 different hands on the golden road north over the last 37 years. Each summer they sink roots at the same eight or nine communities in six states as their two self-propelled combines harvest 6,000 to 7,000 acres of grain.

One of the most recent of the Frys' 60 hands is FFA'er Neal Bergkamp of Valley Center, Kansas. Neal took home for his first year of college the bulk of $3,100 he earned on the 1981 harvest. Salaries for the 1982 harvest were just as impressive. Together with former FFA member Mike McKain of Miltonvale, Kansas, who had made an earlier run, Bergkamp signed on with the Frys for summer, 1982.

With most outfits providing a guaranteed salary plus room and board, a thrifty hand can save a hefty sum for either college or career. Neal, for example, drew only $100 spending money his first summer and took home a balance of $2,800 after his federal taxes were withheld.

"Big money is the thing boys like about harvest," says Claude Rock, former FFA advisor at Eula High School near Abilene, Texas. "They like the traveling, too."

"I can pay a good man $1,000 a month if he treats the machines well," relates Gordon Miller, a ten-year cutter from Garden City, Kansas. Another operator, Tim Givens of Olton, Texas, reports paying his 18-year-old grain buggy driver $225-$250 per week.

Though pay may begin as low as $500 per month for green help, it can peak at more than twice that for experienced hands. The usual, however, falls somewhere with the Frys' $750 monthly guarantee. Like the Frys, some outfits let employees opt between a monthly guarantee and a straight hourly wage. The Frys, for example, would have paid $4 per hour for machine time if it had added up to more than their $750 monthly guarantee. Other outfits offer a bonus to workers who finish an entire season or do outstanding work.

"First thing I ask is, 'Are you afraid of lots of work?'" says Robin Swanson of Kimball, Nebraska, about recruits to run his three combines.

One hand who welcomes hard work is five-year FFA member Dan Harms, who has worked for Mr. Swanson five years now. "The new country" and "the new people" are features of the job which helped Dan decide to make his second harvest.

"I enjoy it best when we're cutting. That's when the time goes by the fastest. You get tired of loafing real fast," says the young Nebraskan during a rainy no-work week in June.

Daily books kept by Irvin Zecha of Great Bend, Kansas, confirm that idle time from bad weather, green wheat or traveling to a new job may add up to as much as half the total days of harvest season. This unpredictability makes a guaranteed salary especially appealing to hired hands.

How can an FFA member find a job on a combine crew? Start looking early, say all operators. Best hunting ground is Kansas and Oklahoma where about 60 percent of all custom outfits begin. Texas, Nebraska, the Dakotas and Montana are home base for the majority of remaining outfits.

"During the winter boys should contact combine owners well in advance," stresses Mr. Rock.

Grain elevator offices, implement dealers and wheat farmers are good sources for names and addresses of

(Continued on next page)

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Go North

(Continued from Page 19)

combine owners. Students also can list applications with state employment services and college placement bureaus.

"Put a classified ad in the *High Plains Journal*," suggests Kansas combiner Larry Phroel. This widely read Dodge City, Kansas, farm publication is perhaps the closest thing custom cutters have to a marketplace.

"We try to get fellows with some experience driving trucks," says Harley Fry. The Fry brothers prefer students who have finished high school, but have hired many juniors and seniors over their 37 harvests. Boys from farm families receive top consideration and those with mechanical aptitude are a prized find.

A respect for his expensive equipment is perhaps the prime concern of a combine owner. With new machines listing as high as $100,000, hot-rodding, negligence or innocent ignorance can erase a combiner's slim margin of profit.

"Screen prospective outfits," Harley Fry urges students going after harvest jobs. Fry indicates that the pick of the outfits are probably ones whose owners' wives also make the run. Such outfits avoid the complaint of "too much cafe cooking" often heard from crews who must bunk in motels and eat in restaurants.

Most long-time outfits offer employees home-cooked meals and sleeping accommodations in mobile homes. Harley Fry's wife Margaret, for example, has cooked for the family's crews since 1946 and could easily add "mother-for-the-summer" and "rainy day recreation director" to her job description.

To any student counting on the guarantee of a full summer's wages, important considerations should be: (1) Does this cutter have regular customers? (2) When and where has his run ended over the recent years? The sad fact is that less-established outfits must abort harvest runs midway into the season due to lack of work.

Equally important to a student: "Can I leave when school starts?" Luckily, by the time combines move into the Dakotas, harvest is less pressing. Many outfits like the Frys' can make do with a skeleton crew, releasing younger hands for school in late August.

Another consideration, few occupations place an employee with his boss and co-workers 24 hours a day. The harvest crew will be your family for three months or more. Is it a family you can live with?

Times have changed since Alan Ladd and his "Wild Harvest" bunch played movie houses in the late '40s. Adventure, conflict and pretty girls were all rolled up in that picturesque harvest myth that America's movie goers relished.

Tall-talking harvest hands still keep that myth alive. But more realistically what you'll hear is good-natured grumbles about long hours—up to 16 hours on a combine, the dirt and itch of the wheat field, the rain and mud that can hold an outfit hostage for days, long elevator lines and 100 degree days.

Nevertheless, dust a thick layer of wheat chaff off these same hands and you'll likely hear a fond rejoinder: "It gets in your blood . . .

"Be back next harvest." •••

Photos by Author

Above: though automatic lifts mean grain trucks are no longer dumped by hand, this hired hand knows his job still includes a wheat scoop.

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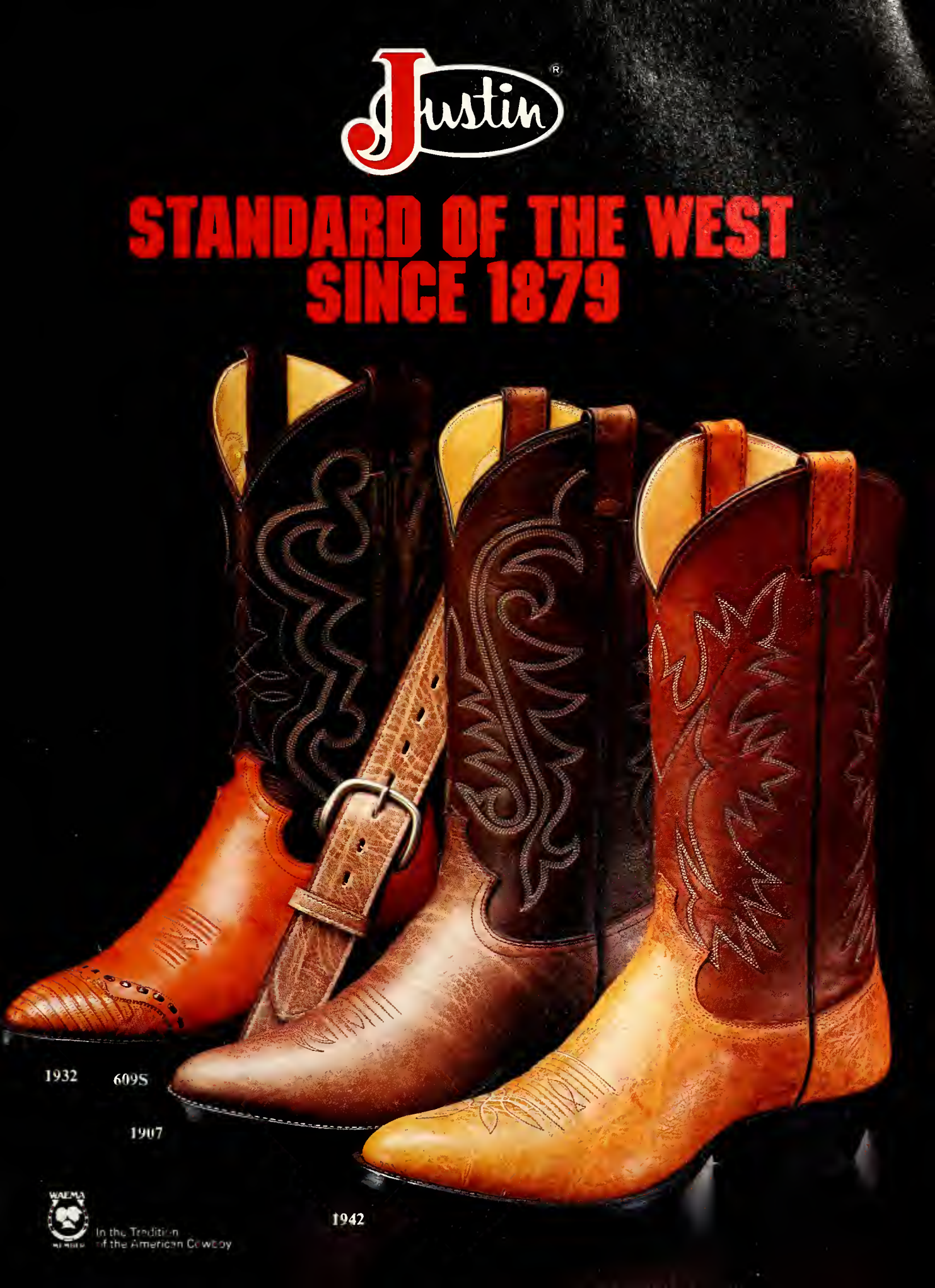

In the Tradition of the American Cowboy

Smart As A Fox

This FFA member gets the same benefits from "hands-on" experience that others do—but he gets his vo-ag training on a very unusual ranch operation.

DWAIN Adams, of Middletown, Indiana, is one FFA member with a most "unusual" farm program. Dwain is part owner and manager of what some consider the largest silver fox ranch in the world.

Sure it's a far cry from the typical crop, livestock or horticulture SOE (Supervised Occupational Experience) Program that most Future Farmers of America operate. But after four years of feeding, vaccinating, keeping records and making management decisions, Dwain's program has given him the same benefits any other FFA'er gets from a supervised project—training, responsibility and skills from "hands-on" experience.

Dwain and his father Merle also farm 1,500 acres of corn and soybean land. But Dwain's main interest is in the fox and mink raising business.

The fox ranch, started by Dwain's grandfather in 1936, now produces 1,500-1,800 foxes per year, mostly silver fox. Even the most knowledgeable fox breeder would be envious of this set-up: endless rows of uniformly-designed fox cages, over 800 pens in all, with a "breeding watch tower" jutting up in the center. The ranch produces both fox pelts and breeding stock.

"We keep 360 pair as breeding stock for ourselves each year," says Dwain, who hails from the Shenandoah, Indiana FFA Chapter. "Each year we sell breeding stock for $800 and up per pair. The rest we sell for pelts. We were getting $400 per pelt a few years ago when the economy was good, but the average is $250 per pelt. We skin between 800 and 1,000 foxes per year."

Like most "ranchers," the Adams growing season begins in spring. Fifteen hundred pups are born between February and April each year, thanks to a four-pup per fox average litter. "That's considered really great in this business," says Dwain. "It's all because we keep careful track of breeding records. If you mess that up you can mess up your whole ranch."

Precision timing is important during the fall breeding season, says the Indiana FFA'er. "You have to know the signs and hit everything on the button," he adds.

But careful breeding is just one of several management areas which Dwain and his father must tend to. Dwain must vaccinate for distemper and parasites. "Disease control is critical with a community of foxes this large," he says.

The animals are fed an experimental feed specially-mixed and bought by the ton. Each day Dwain takes about four hours to feed foxes by hand.

"I consider this a high-labor outfit

(Continued on Page 33)

Top, Dwain gets set for another feeding session as a hungry fox, middle, awaits dinner. Below, Dwain and Shenandoah FFA Advisor Steve Hickey vaccinate the "stock" for distemper.

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To Farm Or Not To Farm:

Is There Still A Choice?

The stakes are high in modern agriculture, but the opportunities still exist to make the scales tip in your favor.

By Michael Wilson

YOU'RE an FFA member and you've decided you want to farm for a living. You're a hard worker, you've learned a lot about farming from vo-ag classes; you've even got a farm background. It'll be a breeze, right?

It's doubtful.

The FFA has always championed the cause for young adults who will someday operate this nation's farms and agribusinesses. But no one can deny agriculture is in a serious state today. You've heard the list of problems so many times you can see it in your sleep: high interest rates that never seem to come down, low commodity prices that never seem to go up, rising production costs...and on and on.

And the problems *never* seem to get better.

Furthermore the serious state of today's farm economy poses an interesting question: Is it really as difficult to successfully start farming today as these problems suggest?

Like most agricultural leaders, U.S. Rep. Steve Gunderson, R-Wis., sees no easy answer to that question. But he does recognize the problem. Congressman Gunderson's duties with the House of Representatives Agriculture Committee, Education and Labor Committee make him sensitive to vo-ag students preparing for careers in agriculture.

"We should be answering some very basic questions pertaining to the 'right' to farm, the structure of the American farm and the overall direction of American agriculture in the 1980s and 1990s," says Congressman Gunderson. His initial solution to solving agriculture's future problems isn't very cheerful news for

beginning farmers. But it makes good sense.

"I believe we should put our number one emphasis on keeping those people already in agriculture above board," he says. "Let's not falsely get people into agriculture until we have it turned around into a profitable business."

But will farming *ever* be consistently profitable?

Before we try to answer that question, let's look at breaking into farming from a different perspective. We know we have problems today—but what was it like for a farmer 100 years ago?

Doctor Hiram Drache, agricultural historian, 31-year farmer and author of several books on agriculture, points out that in the beginning, farmers in this country were "spoiled" by the Homestead Act.

"All you had to do is leave your country, come to the United States and be given 160 acres of land—the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow—and farm," he says.

The farm frontier was officially closed by 1890, and as a result farmers became depressed. "They said 'There is no future for us any more,'" says Doctor Drache, "simply because farmers assumed that it was their right in this country to have free land.

"All things are relative," he points out. "Fifty percent of all people who homesteaded a century ago, failed. In the state of Iowa, over 40 percent failed."

Contributing to the failures were the "boredom and drudgery of farm life in those days before modern transportation and the horrible school system we had then," says Doctor Drache.

"The common statement I'd like to make about farming is that I wish I could put my mind in a 20-year-old body now, because the opportunities *are* here," he says. "And the opportunities are going to be really great down the line as far as I'm concerned. Is it harder to start farming today than it was a century ago? My answer is no."

But before you breathe a sigh of relief, Doctor Drache says certain requirements must be fulfilled for a young person to be successful in farming today. Good extension programs, management programs and the computer are new technologies young farmers should use to be better farm managers.

"One myth that's common among farmers is that if you were born on a farm you have an inherent right to farm. That's about as obsolete as can be."

In other words, management and attitude will play a big role in determining your future.

Born To Farm

And something else: just because you grew up on a farm doesn't qualify you to be the operator someday, he says.

"One myth that is common among farmers is that if you were born on the farm you have an inherent right to farm," he points out. "That's about as obsolete as can be. Land is a very sacred resource, next only to the people of this country. We can entrust it only to the people who can do the best job of managing it: the ones who inherit it by superior management."

"Young people are going to start farming today just like they have in the past, but they are going to be better managers than ever," he stresses. "You can't say you're going to farm because you were born on a farm, though. Now you're going to farm because you can prove you can manage.

"When a young couple comes to me today and says they're having trouble farming, I say the first thing you do is sit down and work out your own budget; second thing you do is work out the farm budget and work out the projections on the farm. Third thing you do is go to your banker and show him those figures and then prove to him that you are determined, that you want to succeed."

Land Prices

Doctor Drache says, "The famous statement you hear so much in agriculture now is 'land is too high priced. You can't make it pay.' I hear that over and over again. It's the same old song and dance about how you can't afford to buy land.

"How many kids have been held back by their fathers because they were told 'Grandpa paid $5 per acre for the land, we paid $50 an acre for the land, and now you want to pay $2,500 an acre for the land and we can't make it pay.' Well if that's the truth, why don't we zip up the country and throw it to the wolves?" he says.

"Land is always higher priced than the average farmer can afford to pay. But as soon as the good farmer learns how to make land pay, at any given level, it will automatically jump to the next plateau because the historic demand for land is greater than the available supply," explains Drache.

The professor believes FFA members will still be able to farm if they want to—in spite of the bleak outlook given by many "experts."

"Never before in history have we had more aids to help young people start farming than today," he says firmly. "I believe there is nothing stronger than a good, dedicated, totally mechanized, well-managed young husband and wife team. We have no farm structure that's superior."

What will the next decades bring for young people in agriculture?

Doctor Drache says the 1980s will be the decade of computers and money management, and the 1990s will be the decade of no-till.

"The reason I'm saying this is that in the '80s we've come into enough of a crunch that we're going to get farmers serious about money management," he says. "The next decade will come after the next energy crisis prior to 1990, and then we will force farmers into no-till because it's going to be the next thing to cause them to reduce their expenditures and also stop abusing land.

DRACHE: "Young people are going to start farming today just like they have been in the past, but they're going to be better managers than ever. You can't say you're going to farm because you were born on a farm, though. Now you're going to farm because you can prove you can manage."

Short-term Options

"There are a lot of people that have gone into agribusiness for a few years, learned the ropes, and then on a deliberate plan went farming," he says.

Congressman Gunderson says, "What a young person should do at this point in time is recognize that with depressed prices, continuing high interest rates and a shaky economy, a young farmer should 1) see if there is ability to work with a father or some other farmer in hopes to take over that farm later on; or 2) consider beginning small and renting some of his equipment, facilities, land, until he gets established. Don't get overly in debt in the beginning."

Doctor Drache agrees. "My advice to young farmers today, male or female, is don't expect to jump into it; don't expect it to be easy. Be prepared, have the mental strength and the spiritual strength to overcome setbacks.

"You have got to expect these setbacks," he says. "This is what makes farming tension-filled, but this is what keeps the person who wants a soft touch *out* of farming.

"FFA is a pretty good example of that," he says. "FFA does a whale of a job of training people to think positive, expect hardships, be realistic, and to go in there and be a winner.

"As we make it tougher to get into farming, we will upgrade the management level of farmers and we will go as far as any other institution or organization has done to improve the basic economic conditions of agriculture," he says.

"The winners are still going to be there." •••

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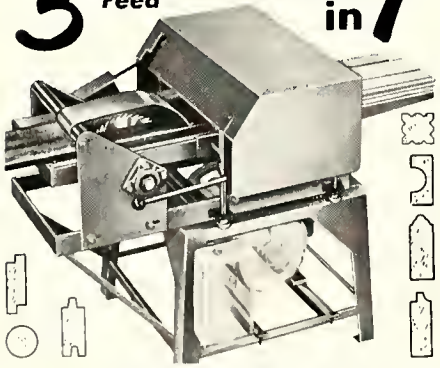

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High Hopes

Tammie McDaniel is living proof big dreams come in small packages

TAMMIE McDaniel, of Tolleson, Arizona, could easily develop a strained neck when she's working with her favorite show horse. She stands just five feet high (without boots). One of those tall quarter horses found on the McDaniel ranch might think he's got the upper hand.

But every horse she's shown or trained knows by now that what Tammie lacks in height she easily makes up for in energy and enthusiasm. Make no mistake about it: this FFA'er knows how to handle her horses.

Tammie rides and works halter horses on the family quarter horse ranch. She's involved in practically all aspects of the business, from working horses on the newly-installed treadmill, vaccination and artificial insemination management. She's got high hopes, though, for her biggest goal right now is to show horses nationwide someday.

"I want to keep active showing for a long, long time," says the 17-year-old Tolleson High School senior. "That's been a goal of mine for quite some time now. I like the excitement, travel and the chance to meet people."

Tammie says the McDaniel family currently attends 15 shows per year in Arizona, plus Alburqurque and the World Finals in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Successful blood lines and name recognition during these shows have made the McDaniel name well-known among horse breeders. Last year the family held three statewide production sales plus a combination sale in New Mexico, selling to buyers from 11 states.

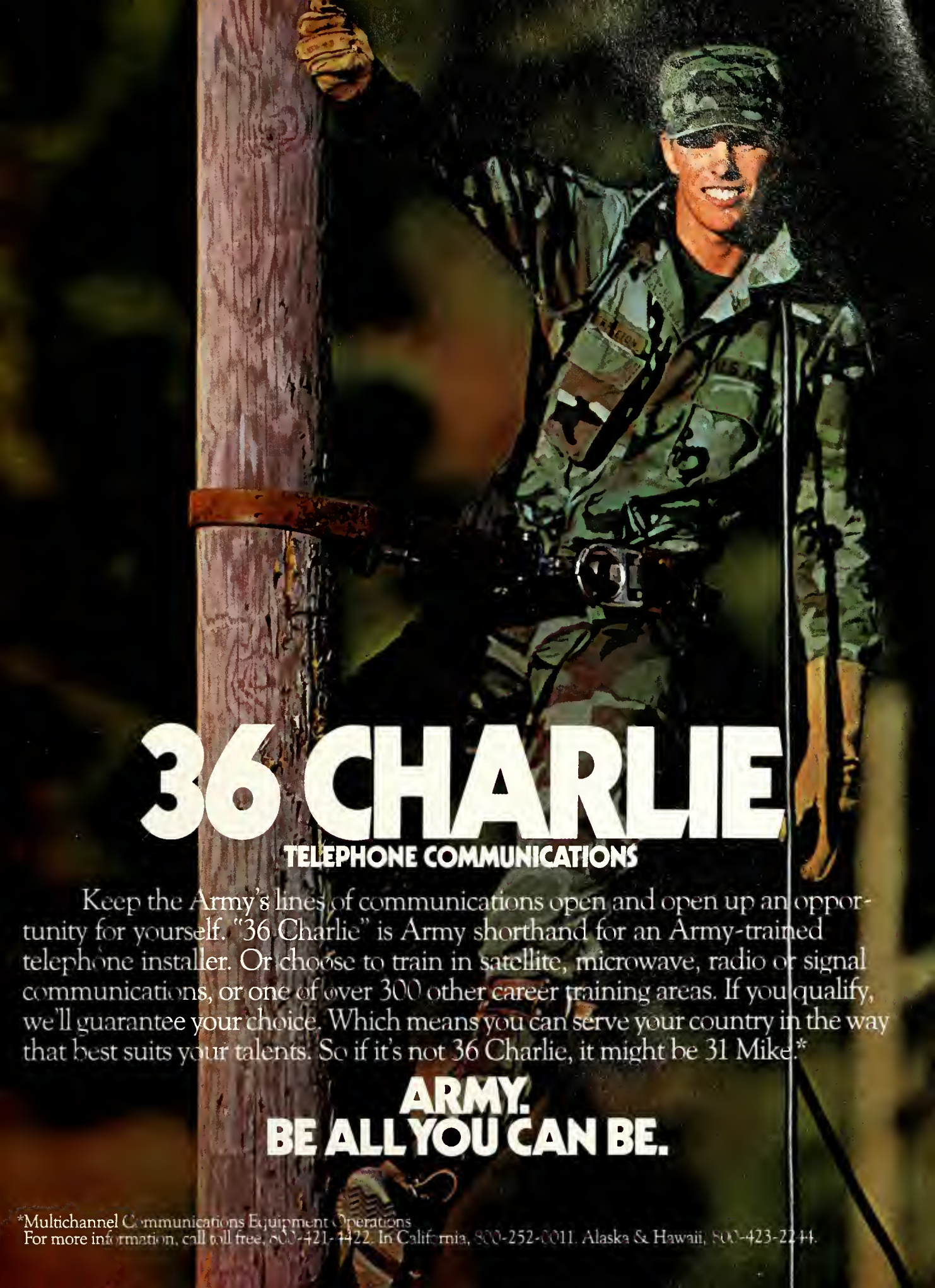
"It used to be people knew us because of showing," says Tammie. "But now it's the breeding—and selling," she says. But it's not just the family's name that's gaining recognition. Tammie is developing her own reputation as a top-notch horseperson.

"I've shown and sold some horses that have gone on and done really well all across the country," she says.

Tammie says she plans to concentrate more on breeding aspects of the McDaniel ranch, besides the showing end of it. "I think we're going to go more toward artificial insemination this year, probably 50-50," she says. The McDaniels keep between 30 and 40 brood mares and five studs on their ranch at one time, although that number used to be higher.

Although horses are Tammie's first love, she's keeping her options open for the future. College and a crack at auctioneering school are the next goals she's set. "I've always wanted to be an auctioneer. I went to an auction when I was five years old, and ever since then I've wanted to be one," she says. She also wants to get a business degree and work in some form of agribusiness. In order to get a head start on college, Tammie plans to graduate from high school next year at midterm. Whatever she decides, her high hopes and high ambitions are sure to carry her to her goal. •••

Left, Tammie is involved in all aspects of the family horse ranch, from vaccinating to showing.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The Legend of Casey Fortune

It took a special breed of cowboy to tame the wild, western frontier. Legends, they called them. Folks like Jesse James and Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid.

And although FFA'er Casey Fortune is not really a legend, yet—he just might be someday if he keeps up his champion rodeo and FFA activities.

He certainly has the name for it.

Twenty-year-old Casey was born and raised on the Fortune family cow/calf ranch near Cottonwood, South Dakota. From the no-nonsense look in his eye to the dust on his boots, one can tell he means business. Forget all those pictures you've seen of the urban cowboy jocks in city-slick magazines. Casey is all cowboy. *Real cowboy.*

And he knows what it takes to handle the demands of a multi-thousand-acre cattle ranch found in the "Badlands" of South Dakota.

The Badlands are wide open, ideal for grazing cattle. This is where a "small place" is "five or six thousand" acres, says Casey, one that can "only handle a couple hundred head of cows." On a clear day the deep blue sky swoops down to meet the graceful curves of rolling hills, one after another, that stretch into eternity.

It's bad country to some. For others like Casey, though, it's God's country.

Casey says he picked up most of his

Left, Casey Fortune knows what it takes to handle a multi-thousand acre ranch in the Badlands of South Dakota. Below, Casey displays the saddle he won as 1981 SDHSRA champion saddle bronc rider.

ranching skills from his dad, Eugene "Bud" Fortune. "He taught me every trade in ranching, whether it's horse-breaking or taking care of sick animals," adds Casey. Cattle are Hereford-Angus cross, crossed again with Limousin.

He started with 35 replacement heifers when he was 12 years old, a reward for helping manage the family herd through one of the worst snow blizzards to hit South Dakota. He currently runs 134 head of cows, 126 beef calves and 10 head of bulls. Casey, a member of the Wall FFA Chapter, earned the South Dakota FFA beef proficiency award last year and was nominated to receive his American Farmer Degree this year.

Living in the Badlands, chances are your nearest neighbor is 45 miles away. As a result, most ranch operators lend each other a hand when something big needs to be accomplished. Each year the Fortune family holds the annual branding session where friends and relatives—about 80 folks altogether—come up from all over to pitch in with the cattle.

"Everyone gets involved," says Casey. Each person has an assignment, whether it be vaccination, de-horning, castration or branding. "Everybody's got a job," says Casey, "even the kids—they give the calves scour pills because it's easier."

Although Casey enjoys ranching, he admits rodeoing is his favorite sport. "I was born with it," Casey says of his riding ability. He was riding horses as a three-year-old when his mom Dorothy Fortune gave him a colt for his birthday. His first rodeo experience was shortly thereafter.

"I was in the boys barrel racing contest when I was three and four years old," recalls Casey. "Then I got involved in Little Britches, the Junior and Senior division and SDRA, South Dakota Rodeo Association."

Casey's favorite event is "saddle bronc" riding, but he also enjoys bulldog, bareback, bullride, calf rope and team rope.

He's a talented and skilled rider; scores of buckles, plaques on the family room wall and saddles he's won, for example, prove it. In 1981 Casey was named South Dakota State High School rodeo champion. He won reserve champion at the National High School Rodeo Finals in Douglas, Wyoming, that year also. Both wins came in the saddle bronc category.

Casey's rodeoing activities have not always been so rewarding, though. He's had four broken arms and a broken collarbone, all from rodeo events. So why does he continue?

"I guess I just like cowboys competing against each other, proving you can be better than somebody else," he says. Casey's goal is to win the PRCA (Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association) finals. "That's the top," he adds. "Everybody wants that, but you've got to build your name up."

Casey's got it mapped out to win his goal before he's thirty. "Bullriders are burned out by the time they're 25," he says. "But I've been competing against guys five and ten years older than me, guys with much more experience. And I've beat them."

Casey says he eventually wants to settle into ranching on the home ranch. "There's enough for all four of us kids," he says. After all, he says, "I've never really wanted to do anything else. I know it's a lot of work," Casey adds thoughtfully. "But there's a lot of work in anything you do, if you want to be good at it."

If Casey's rodeo, ranching and FFA activities are any indicator, you can be sure he takes that attitude with him in all he hopes to accomplish. •••

Below, Casey, right, helps brand calves on cousin Robert Fortune's cattle ranch. "Everybody's got a job," says Casey.

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He's Off And Running

Above, Tom rides with Hennessey FFA Advisor Kenny Beams, right.

Like the thoroughbreds he works with, Tom Sturgeon's career as a trainer of racetrack-bound horses is moving ahead of the pack

SOMETIMES the road FFA members take on the way toward winning a national proficiency award can take some mighty strange twists. At least, that's how it began for 1982 National Horse Proficiency winner Tom Sturgeon, of Hennessey, Oklahoma.

The story goes something like this: as a 12-year-old, like most budding teenagers, Tom desperately wanted his own motorcycle. Not horses, mind you—a motorcycle. "So dad gave me a horse to break and told me if I'd train that horse he'd get me that motorcycle," says Tom, a friendly, enthusiastic 19-year-old.

And on the road toward a national FFA award, even motorcycles can put you on the right track—in Tom's case, a racetrack.

Tom received his motorcycle for Christmas that year, but he also found himself caught up in a new-found interest in horses. Almost seven years later, Tom stood on the National FFA Convention stage to receive the top award in the horse production category, sponsored by the American Quarter Horse Association.

By the time he was 14 Tom was doing as much breaking and training work with horses as he could find time for. But it wasn't until he was a sophomore in high school before he became involved in vocational agriculture and FFA.

"Probably the reason I wasn't in vo-ag as a freshman was that I didn't realize all the opportunities available in FFA and vo-ag," he says. "I thought, 'What do I need to know about that, I've been out on the farm.'"

"But I found out what vo-ag was really about," he adds. "Vo-ag really motivated me to improve my program. I also learned record keeping and such—but motivation was probably the biggest thing."

Tom's horse-training skills now make him a valuable, sought-after professional for hire. His clients seek him out to train both quarter horses and thoroughbreds which are trained "mostly for racing," says Tom. "The quarter horses go on to become primarily ranch horses for cattle, roping or barrel horses."

Once he breaks a racehorse to ride, the horse must be "conditioned" and "gate broken," which means getting a horse ready to break out of the starting gate used for horse races. Tom's racehorse training activities start in fall. If the thoroughbreds are broken well enough by spring he takes them to a racetrack 85 miles north of his central Oklahoma home to get them used to a track.

Tom needs less time for cattle horses—between 45 and 60 days, he estimates. He often uses his father Jack Sturgeon's 200 head of cattle for training purposes. But since thoroughbreds take more time to train, Tom spends about 60 percent of his time with the racers.

Motorcycles weren't the only thing that motivated Tom to achievement. He spent a week between his junior and senior year learning leadership skills at the FFA's Washington Conference Program (WCP) held each summer.

"By the end of the week I was amazed at the things I'd learned about FFA, leadership and the number of friends I had made," recalls Tom. "WCP taught me that there are those who make things happen, those who watch things happen, and those who wonder what happened."

Besides the dollars invested in both horses and equipment, Tom has invested many long hours on his program. As he puts it: "By not being in some other activities I was able to devote a lot more of my time and ambition to vo-ag and FFA. I was able to get a lot out of it as far as practical experience, meeting other people and seeing a lot of the country."

"Tom did it himself, nothing was handed to him," says an obviously proud Kenny Beams, FFA advisor at Hennessey. "He's not just satisfied with going out and buying or training a horse. He always wants to learn more about the business." Mr. Beams says he saw Tom's potential for earning national achievement early in Tom's FFA career. "On the state level you pretty much know where you stand," he says, referring to Tom's Oklahoma Horse Proficiency award. "But I had no idea on the national level. I just hoped he'd do well...and he did."

Not bad for a guy who just wanted a motorcycle for Christmas. •••

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Careers in Agriculture

Graduation and the work world may seem a long way off. But that's no reason to postpone thinking about your future and the kind of career to pursue. This is The National FUTURE FARMER's *fourth in a series of stories designed to inform you about career opportunities in agriculture.*

Ag Journalism

By Shirley Jones

LET's face facts: the phrase "Agricultural Journalism" may sound a little confusing.

It's confusing to people who ask me what I do for a living. ("What's an Egg Journalist?" one well-meaning lady asked.) It's confusing to my boss. (He may wonder how anyone can be working when they're staring out the window searching for ideas.) And above all, it's confusing to me, as I wonder if such a simple human being could possibly take an idea and turn it into a story other people would be interested in.

But instead of trying to answer these and other questions myself, like any reporter, I turned to other ag journalists for answers. Here's what they said:

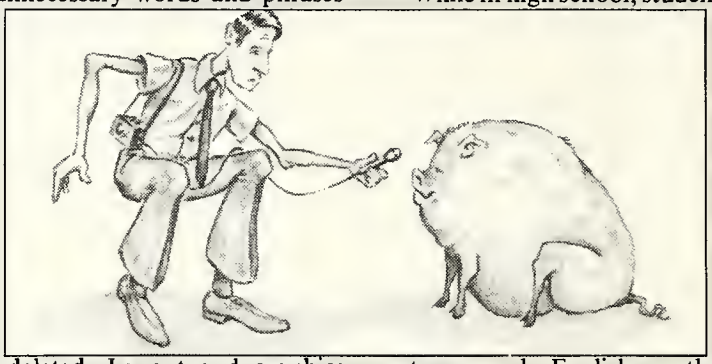
WHAT IS AN AG JOURNALIST? Webster's Dictionary defines journalist as "a writer who aims at a mass audience." An ag journalist, then, is a journalist who specializes in agricultural writing or broadcasting. In a broader sense, ag communications includes areas like public relations and a host of other jobs. For this article we'll stick to journalism in the print medium, which includes newspapers and magazines, and the broadcast medium, which includes radio and television.

IS THERE A NEED FOR AN AG JOURNALIST? Wouldn't a plain old journalist do just as well? Perhaps, but knowledge of the subject seems to make for more accurate journalism, since a writer has a basic understanding of his subject and attitudes in advance of starting an interview or writing a story.

WHAT KIND OF JOBS DOES AN AG JOURNALISM COLLEGE DEGREE PREPARE ME FOR? Once you have the training, there are many options says Bob Rodgers, journalism professor at Texas A&M University at College Station, Texas. Positions for writers and editors of farm magazines and newspapers, livestock and crop organizations, reporters for company magazines, the government, television and radio are available to the ag journalist. Chances of getting a job after graduation are excellent, says Rodgers, because so many organizatons need journalists. Also, few people graduate in ag journalism each year.

WHAT KIND OF CLASSES DO YOU ENROLL IN? Variety is the secret to becoming a competent journalist. Marilyn Cummins, a former state FFA officer and now managing editor of *Agri Marketing* magazine says, "You have to be interested in a wide variety of topics."

Classes usually include basic writing and editing, which means checking a story carefully to see if grammar and spelling are correct, if quotes are accurate and if unnecessary words and phrases can be deleted. Layout and graphics classes teach how to place elements on a page so a reader will find it easy to understand. Broadcasting classes offer experience in writing for TV or radio, using a camera, or talking on the air.



WHAT DO YOU DO ALL DAY? As managing editor, Marilyn is responsible for making decisions on what goes in each edition, writing stories, coming up with design ideas and lots of interaction with her staff. "You never sit at a desk doing the same thing, hour after hour," she laughs. "You're barely doing it minute after minute."

IS JOURNALISM HARD WORK? Just ask former national officer David Pearce how easy it is to get up every morning in time to report to work at 5 a.m., and be pleasant and enthusiastic, besides. While still enrolled in college, David works for the Brownfield Network, which supplies agricultural markets and farm stories to a nine-state area. Journalism may look glamorous, Marilyn agrees, but involves "lots of long, lonely hours." However, both Marilyn and David say the strange hours are worth the effort. "You never know what's going to happen next," says David. "That makes it exciting."

DO I NEED A FARM BACKGROUND? It helps, says Marilyn, but it's not a requirement. "My farm background got me interested in the field," she says, "but it doesn't mean you have to grow up raising cattle and throwing hay bales to do a good job."

WHAT SKILLS DO I NEED? Curiosity, confidence and good communications skills are necessary.

While in high school, students should get as much English as they can—grammar and literature, Professor Rodgers says. Write on the school newspaper or yearbook, he advises, and get involved in FFA as much as possible. Any practical experience to sharpen language skills and working with words will be a plus to a journalist—which includes activities like FFA public speaking and serving as chapter reporter.

That experience becomes invaluable when working with people on a story, says Ms. Cummins. "There's a certain amount of bravery required to call someone up on the phone and convince them to talk to you, knowing full well that what they say will be written down for everyone to read." Such confidence is also important in broadcasting, says David, who recalls his first night on the air at his local radio station. "I was petrified," he remembers, "but it was also fun. The experiences I had in FFA are not totally responsible, but FFA gave me lots of things to do over the years that built up my confidence."

Writing skills, too, are important. Every journalist needs them, says Professor Rodgers, including broadcasters.

WHAT'S THE FUTURE HOLD FOR THE PROFESSION? "I'm optimistic," says Marilyn. "Although ag journalism is changing, even with computers, someone will still have to gather the news, write it and put it in a system. I think, too, the larger city newspapers will have reporters who cover the ag news.

"You really have to be sharp to be a good journalist, because your product is so visible. If there's a misspelled word, everybody knows it. If there's a mistake, everybody sees it. I think good people will always have a job." •••

Shirley Jones is a former FFA State Officer, WCP counselor and National FFA information intern. She currently works as Communications Manager for Agri Business Associates in Indianapolis, Indiana.

Fox Ranch

(Continued from Page 22)

because of the feedings," he says. "But it used to involve even more labor up until two years ago when we installed automated waterers in each pen. That saves us another four-and-a-half hours per day."

The foxes are processed in November by killing, skinning, stretching and curing. Animals are killed instantly with a painless injection of poison. "November is when pelts are top quality," he says. "If you don't get them then they can go downhill fast."

The worldwide scope of the Adams' fox ranch becomes apparent through the marketing of these pelts. After they're tagged for identification and graded according to texture, color, length and all-around appearance, pelts are stacked in a box and sold to practically all major fur exchange points in the world: Seattle, Toronto, New York or London, to name a few. Dwain says that worldwide market is good for business.

"The market may be bad in New York but good in London," he says. Dwain believes a philosophy common to most farmers and ranchers: "We don't put all our eggs in one basket."

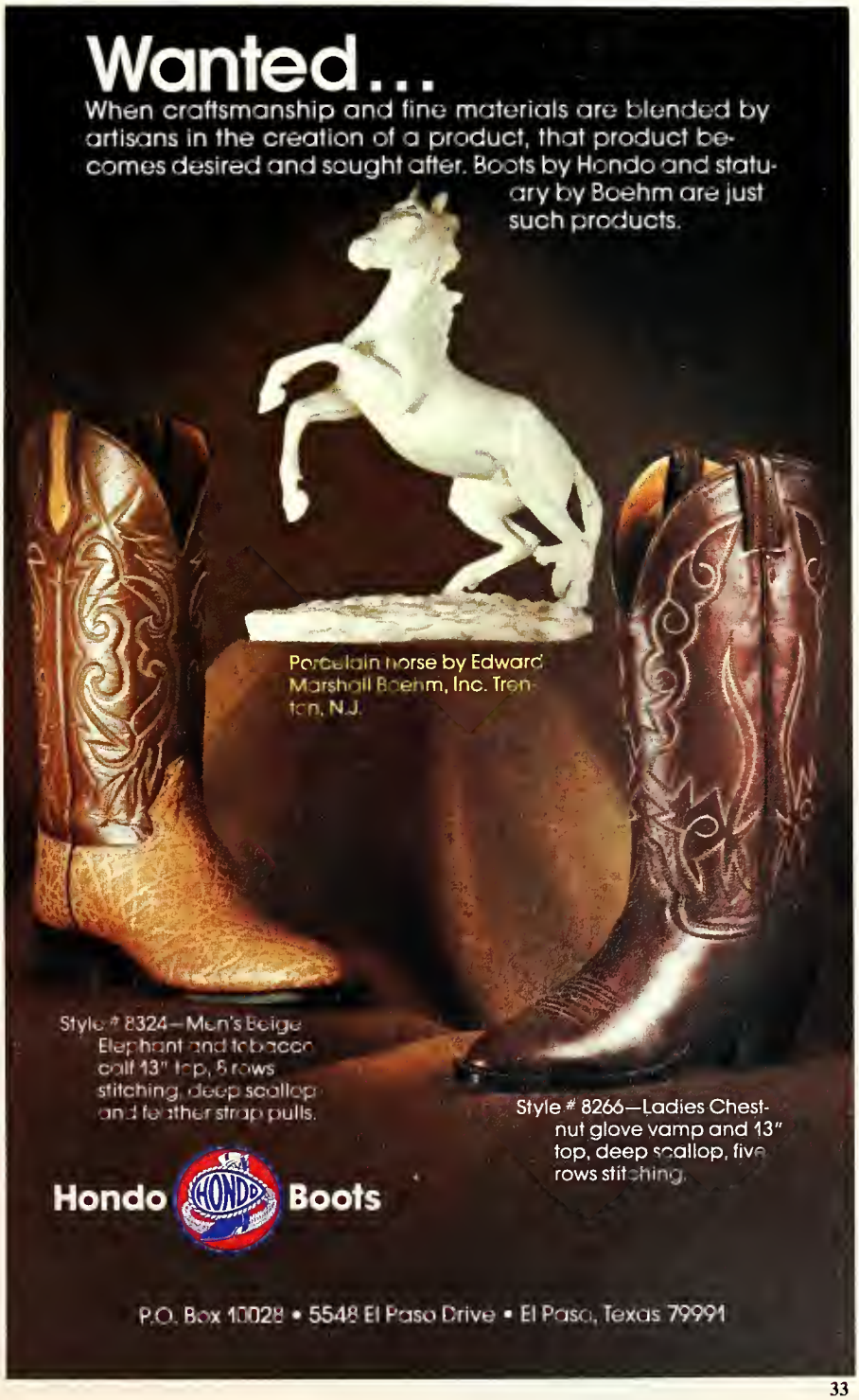
To drum up more fur-buying business, Mr. Adams owns a Cessna airplane that he uses to fly to distant points at a moment's notice. "We also have agents buying for us all over the country," offers Dwain. "We give them a price and whatever they get more for it they keep."

An advertisement placed by the Adams in *The Wall Street Journal* is evidence enough of the importance of the fur-trading business.

Dwain says he's learned quite a bit since taking on more responsibility for the fox ranch—so much in fact, he's had offers to both operate and manage the building of a new fox ranch in Alaska. But he says he sees too much potential at home to consider leaving now.

"We're still growing," he says. "We're even thinking about more than doubling what we've got now." Dwain is a pretty smart fox himself, for like other farmers, he constantly invests profits back into the operation. "We make a lot of money off the foxes, but we put it right back into both the farming and the fox business," he adds. •••

Above, Dwain is surrounded by a sea of fox cages.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News, Notes, and Nonsense from Everywhere

Chapter Scoop

by Jack Pitzer

Meade County, KY, FFA'ers earned their tickets to the National Farm Machinery Show and Championship Tractor Pull in Louisville by selling magazines, working at the fish booth at the county fair and selling popcorn during ball games.

N-N-N

Guest speaker for the *Upper Bucks Tech*, PA, FFA banquet was Pennsylvania Secretary of Agriculture Penrose Hallowell.

N-N-N

Bill McGlinch and **Brad Henderson** plowed the community garden plots in *Greenville*, OH.

N-N-N

Even though their greenhouse is not completed, *Caddo Hills*, AR, Chapter is selling tomato, pepper and marigold seedlings grown in their house.

N-N-N

In *Sumrall*, MS, FFA and FHA have an annual cookout at a recreation center.

N-N-N

Money earned by *Colstrip*, MT, in a donkey basketball game was used to sponsor a $500 scholarship to outstanding senior **Alice Broadus.**

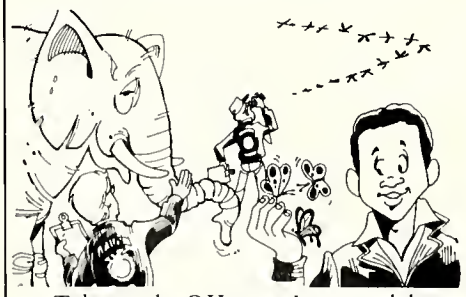
N-N-N

Glide, OR, revived the tradition of giving the out-going president a gavel.

N-N-N

The Helping Hand award given annually to a member of *Kofa*, AZ, Chapter who unselfishly gives time and talent for the betterment of the chapter and its members went to **Larry Koretz.**

N-N-N



Talawanda, OH, members participated in a mammal, entomology and waterfowl judging contest organized for FFA at the Cincinnati Zoo.

N-N-N

Congrats to *Pojoaque*, NM, who held their first FFA parent-member banquet.

N-N-N

Half-time feature during the donkey basketball game sponsored by *Lake Region* FFA in Orleans, VT, was a basketball relay for grade school'ers.

N-N-N

Each year in June the *Montevideo*, MN, Chapter has a hog barbeque to wish the graduating seniors the best of luck in their future. It also brings the active and Alumni members together.

Three girls in the *Green Bay Southwest*, WI, Chapter ran in the March of Dimes super run and finished first, second and third in their age division. Advisor Davis won his age group and was second overall.

N-N-N

Fairbanks, OH, is out to raise $2,500 to acquire a computer for their use in marketing, accounting, figuring depreciation and many other uses. They already have matching funds from their state department of vocational education which they had to match or lose.

N-N-N

Hudson, FL, is growing hydroponic cucumbers in the school greenhouse and then selling them to support their expansion into hydroponic farming.

N-N-N

Wayne Beltz had to spend the day in the county jail—painting, that is—for his work after the FFA slave sale at *Willow Springs*, MO.

N-N-N

Three members of *Waterford*, OH, FFA were selected for the state FFA band and chorus. That's where many members get their first state convention experience.

N-N-N

More and more chapter newsletters showing up in our mailbag lately. Latest was the *Omro*, WI, "Plow-Sharer."

N-N-N

How are those corn, bean, wheat and other crop demonstration plots and chapter farm crops coming along? Write and tell us about your chapter's. *DeWitt Central*, IA, planted their corn May 10 and it was coming up well when they wrote. Their beans went in May 25.

N-N-N

When **Beverly Howard** gave her retiring officer address as president of the *Granton*, WI, Chapter at the banquet she also presented her check for $100 Life membership in the FFA Alumni.

N-N-N

Oberlin, KS, members had a different idea for FFA WEEK. They made posters for each member's locker at school. Poster told what the member had done during the year in FFA. Another good idea they had was a sunrise sevice on Sunday of the WEEK and then a faculty and parent recognition breakfast after.

This year the *Lexington*, OK, Chapter started giving a $100 scholarship to the most active and deserving senior. The goal of the scholarship is to encourage involvement in the chapter's total program. **K. C. Ely** was the first winner.

N-N-N

Members of *Elgin*, OH, FFA get one-half school credit by 1) attending at least two of the three summer meetings; 2) attend at least one of the authorized camps; 3) exhibit at the county fair; 4) all day demonstration at state fair; 5) attend four of eight education days during summer; and 6) have an on-going summer experience.

N-N-N

Instead of their annual banquet, *Zillah*, WA, had an awards night, dessert and farmers dance.

N-N-N

Marlow, OK, Chapter held its third annual approved rodeo in May. A fun highlight was a wild steer riding contest. The FFA made about $1,500 too.

N-N-N

Prompted by the plug in this column last issue, **John Tidwell**, reporter for *Oneonta*, AL, sent news about their officers attending state convention.

N-N-N

Another report prompted by the plug in the last issue, came from Treasurer **Gregory Ford** of *Durham*, NC, who wrote to tell of the success the chapter is having and credits it to their two hard working advisors.

N-N-N

During the *Bremen*, IN, Chapter ski trip, **Chris Demein** was hot dogging it and broke his ankle.

N-N-N

Harvey Prater, Gary Skaggs and Carol Hewlett, of *Lawrence County* FFA in Louisa, KY, were treated to a free dinner and given trophies for their essays in a Soil Conservation Service contest.

N-N-N

A new addition to the vo-ag classroom in *Bunker Hill*, IN, is a large full-color FFA emblem painted on the wall by members **Mark Harmon, Kent Braden, Chris Weaver** and **Jack Windsor.**

N-N-N

Keep us posted about nifty chapter activities, about successes of members and about what makes you enjoy FFA.

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SIZES: Widths: N, 6-9, 10 M, 5-10

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Our new 1983-84 catalog will be mailed in mid-July to all chapters.

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FFA in Action

Mr. Gary Hermann, at left, representing Westvaco, was chairman of the timber harvesting field day committee and is commending the three top winners in this year's forest products field day. They are shown with Mr. Hermann, left to right: Terry Fore, Marion Chapter; Michael Potts, Marion; Vonalyn Phillips, Walterboro.

Awards in the Woods

Forest products participants from Marion and Walterboro High Schools won the top three individual honors in the rugged annual South Carolina forest products field day held recently at Manchester State Forest. Terry Fore from Marion topped the field of over 100 vocational agriculture students to claim top honors with a score of 470 points of a possible 500. Michael Potts of Marion placed second with a score of 467 points and Vonalyn Phillips of Walterboro was third with 434 points.

The field day brought together the top students enrolled in forest products courses in selected high schools across the state. The rugged hands-on competition saw students utilize the same skills they are taught in their classrooms, including: (1) estimating pulpwood and standing trees, (2) scaling saw logs to determine the amount of lumber they will yield when sawed into boards, (3) determining the volume of pulpwood on trucks, (4) estimating the volume of standing saw timber and (5) prescribing recommended timber thinning practices.

These participants are determining the board feet of lumber each log will yield when sawed into boards.

Schools offering the forest products courses are: Crescent High School (Anderson County), H. S. Clinkscales, agriculture teacher; Walterboro High School (Colleton County), Jerry Gowdy, agriculture teacher; Andrews High School (Georgetown County), Gilmoe McManus, agriculture teacher; Marion High School (Marion County), Walter Tart, agriculture teacher; and Chester Area Vocational Center (Chester County), Douglas Shannon, agriculture teacher.

The forest products field day and curriculum are sponsored by certain pulp and paper industry organizations: Bowater, Champion International Corporation, International Paper Company, Westvaco and Stone Container Corporation. Each organization furnished one member who serves on an advisory committee to the teachers who have forest products courses and to the state vocational agriculture staff who supervise the courses in selected high schools. The industry representatives arrange to move timber harvesting equipment which is rotated among the six schools that offer the course. The equipment is scheduled for one month each year at each school. Earl Frick, district consultant of agricultural education, Florence, conducted the field day activities this year.

FFA Flag Flies at Headquarters

The official FFA flag was flown under the lighted American flag on top of the Agway headquarters building in DeWitt, New York, during National FFA WEEK.

The blue and gold flag measures 5 feet by 8 feet. It was attached to the 50-foot flag staff above the six story headquarters building, just below the 6-foot by 10-foot American flag, which has become a landmark in central New York.

"The future of agriculture, and of farm cooperatives like Agway, will be in the hands of these young people who are currently FFA members," according to William A. Hiller, president of Agway.

"It is appropriate that we honor this outstanding youth organization and these sons and daughters of so many of our Agway members, by flying the FFA flag at Agway headquarters during National FFA WEEK," he said. "Many Agway employees were FFA members and studied vocational agriculture during their high school careers."

Clowning Around

Becoming a rodeo clown is an unique activity for an FFA member in South Dakota. Bob Harvey, a senior in the Brookings vo-ag department, is determined to make it as a PRCA (Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association) clown.

Bob first got his start in 1973 at the Sitting Bull Stampede in South Dakota with professional clown Bunky Boger. After that evening, Bob, who was only eight years old at the time, has worked with many professional clowns.

In 1976, Bob was given a six-year-old trained willy goat from Bunky Boger. Bobber, the goat, was trained to jump through a hoop, camel crawl, walk on his hind legs, walk on his front legs, operate a teeter-totter and do his Richard Nixon interpretation.

Harvey, who takes a special pride in animals, has worked with animals ranging from mules and goats to puppies and piglets. "Bob has always been involved with animals and all of his FFA projects have involved animals," replies his FFA advisor J. E. Kleinsasser.

Chicken Cookers

One of the activities the Willard, Ohio, FFA has every summer is a chicken barbeque held for parents, members and invited guests.

The chapter started by buying 200 baby chicks in mid-March and raising them until they were big enough to be put in the chapter barn. Then the members took turns feeding and taking care of the chickens every day.

When the chickens weighed an average of five pounds, the chapter decided it was time to butcher.

The purpose of the barbeque is to promote FFA in the Willard area. Our barbeque was held in June along with our softball tournament. *(Dave Featheringill, Reporter)*

A Circle of Three

The Gervais, Oregon, Chapter has developed a new program to help get the members more involved with FFA. They call the new program the "Winner's Circle."

The program is designed so that once a member obtains 22 points they receive a pin with the chapter's name and the year that they received the pin engraved on it. After three years, if they make the circle each year, they will receive two more pins which will form a three-ring design and after four years in the circle, they will receive a laurel leaf cluster. The members receive points for each FFA activity that they take part in. This includes all meetings, contests and money-makers. Once a member gets 22 points, the extra points, if any, are carried over from year to year and

several of our members are well on their way to receiving their next 22 points which count for next year's pin.

This year we have 15 members in the winner's circle; Rich Pranger, Coy Boen, Frank Prantl, Mary Saalfeld, Tony Shclechter, Evan Sullivan, Jenny Combs, Glen Dark, Dave Dickman, Sue Fershweiler, Greg Fitzgerald, Jeff Kushnick, Chris Leith, Paul Massee and Greg Leith.

We hope that this program will help members get more enthusiastic about all of the activities that we have. *(Jenny Combs, Reporter)*

It Takes Two To Make A Cheeseburger

No wonder the Wiggins, Colorado, Greenhands' Food For America program is such a hit. They let students color, plant seeds, make and eat a cheeseburger with a friend and see livestock and machinery, right at the grade school.

In the planning stages, the chapter as a whole voted to let the Greenhands cover the Food For America program. The Greenhands used the FFA handbook to organize the program. The principal of the elementary school was contacted in order to clear the event.

The children were divided into four groups; two kindergarten groups, one first grade and one second grade. One group colored an activity page which was later posted. Prizes were awarded to the best colorers. Two groups had the students pair up with another person and had them make cheeseburgers. The other group planted various seeds.

During the program the *Fort Morgan Times* had pictures taken and later carried an article in the agricultural paper. *(Mike Bass, Greenhand Reporter)*

Everybody can learn about food when you get "hands on" experience and make a real cheeseburger.

Legislative Meal Function

Prior to FFA WEEK in February, the state officers of the Missouri Association hosted a dinner and program for the members of the agriculture committees in the Missouri Senate and House of Representatives. Forty-one of the 58 committee members were present for the dinner and all stayed through adjournment. The dinner was sponsored by the state Farm Bureau Federation.

Kurt Voss, Union, state FFA president, chaired the meeting and Tom Lynch, vice president, Ozark, gave the invocation. Speakers were David Hill, vice president from Smithville on "Education Through Study and Experience"; Joi Morris, state secretary, Hamilton, spoke on "Appreciation for Support"; and Rhonda Scheulen, past state president, Westphalia, spoke on "Why I Want To Be A Farmer."

In addition to the four state officers on the program, time was available for comments by the four legislative committee chairmen — Senator Nelson Tinnin, agriculture committee; Senator Danny Staples, conservation, parks and tourism committee; Representative Norwood Creason, agriculture committee; and Representative Robert Dunning, agribusiness committee. Other greetings were extended by C. R. Johnston, president, Farm Bureau Federation; James Boillot, director, state department of agriculture; Frank Drake, assistant commissioner, career and adult educa-

(Continued on Page 40)

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New In Western Wear

Below, Miller Western Wear shirts introduces a dressier look to their new line with this men's fancy striped 55 percent cotton/45 percent polyester shirt, which features narrow striping, patch pocket and pencil slot.

Above, two new items from the Bailey Hat Company: left, the new "Trailhand" felt hat from their Cowtown Collection features the traditional six-inch crown. Above right, the pick of the pros is Bailey's official PRCA staw hat made of genuine Formosan panama in wheat color, featuring four-inch rodeo brim.

Below, walk through all kinds of weather in one versatile and reversible jacket from Pioneer Wear, offered in navy-gray or brown-beige combinations. Jacket reverses to solid nylon shell; collar, waistband are striped knit.

Left, Blackwood Spurs' Show Collection's new "California Curved Cutter," spurs which come in blued or stainless steel.

Right, the Wagon Wheel Buckle Series is a new, limited edition collection offered by Tony Lama, made of antiqued solid white brass.

Above, western styling in durable Tex Twill: Levi's new Saddleman Side Pocket Jacket, made of 100 percent Fortrel polyester, has a comfortable dress western look, with the same classic styling as the Levi Jean Jacket.

Below left, Tony Lama spices up its line for spring with coordinating belts and boots in stylish colored exotic leathers. The new "chili cow" boot (shown) is stitched in silver and worn with matching belt. Below right, Acme Boot Company's new style 1659 features a stitched quarter and hand corded medallion in chili buggywhip leather.

Below, Nocona Boot Company adds additional strength to its line of boots with the Granite Gray Crushed Goat Style Number 3004, featuring a soft, gray leather. Below right, a gray buffalo calf grain cowhide foot highlights this new item from Laredo Western Boots. The boot features a full leather lining and leather outsole.

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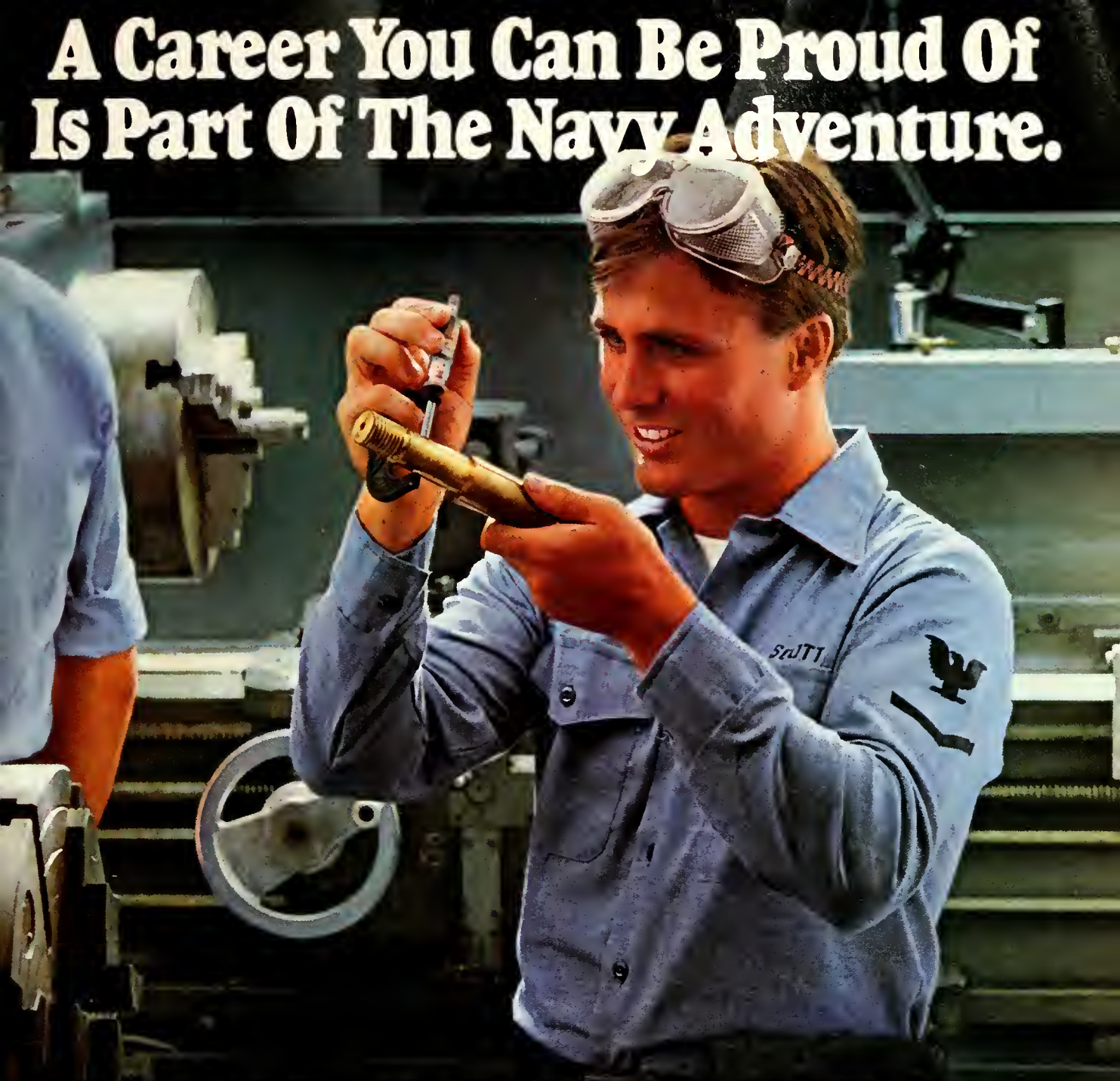

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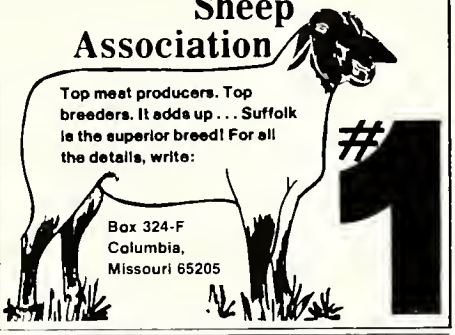

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FFA in Action

(Pick up ACTION from Page 37)

tion; and William J. Wasson, deputy commissioner, state department of elementary and secondary education.

The meeting with the legislators was the last activity of the annual FFA state officer goodwill tour.

During the three day tour, the state officers presented programs for 24 school assemblies, 23 civic clubs and 28 news media including radio, TV and newspapers.

The 13 state officers and two past officers were divided into five groups of three so they could meet the many program requests from Jefferson City to Kansas City. All programs were well received and the officers were encouraged to come back.

The assembly programs for both junior and senior high schools included skits developed by the officers portraying various prototype groups commonly found in schools. Although the skits included characters from good to bad and serious to funny they were interwoven with a monologue to help each individual in the audience identify themselves and secure ideas for improvement. The programs referred to various school groups and activities and the only reference to the FFA was the official dress of the state officers and opening and closing ceremonies by the chapter officers.

The civic club programs included a speech on agriculture problems and solutions, a speech on leadership development and vocational education and a speech on rural-urban relationships. If time permitted a question and answer period was included.

Each year since 1954, the state officers of the association have taken a goodwill tour through a selected area of Missouri.

Rural Robbers

Rural crime is an ever increasing problem facing rural areas. Farm machinery, grain and feed are becoming easy targets for thieves. The Oberlin, Kansas, Chapter has become aware of this problem and are trying to reduce the number of thefts in the area. Members felt the first step was to inform as many people as possible about this problem. The Farm Bureau and the county sheriff were contacted to assist in developing a crime prevention program.

The Kansas Farm Bureau and the Kansas Bureau of Investigation have developed a marking system for implements. Each farmer is assigned an individual number which is placed on implements. The chapter made plans to assist in marking these items.

To kick off the campaign the chapter held a fish and mountain oyster fry. The members sold tickets, prepared the meal, and served over 150 area farmers and interested persons. A film on rural crime and a discussion of the program was presented by the members. The local Farm Bureau president and the sheriff helped with the presentations. Examples of local thefts and how they might have been prevented were stressed. At the conclusion of the program, farmers were asked to sign up for the program. The chapter members are now marking their equipment. *(Becky Tally, Reporter)*

One Good Job Earns Another

The Denton, Texas, FFA, through the ornamental horticulture program, was in charge of landscaping one of our new elementary schools—Sam Houston Elementary.

The horticulture class planted a total of 49 trees (all 3-inch caliber) and 316 shrubs including abelia, Japanese ligustrum, wax leaf ligustrum, junipers, pittosporum, boxwood and liriope. All trees were balled and burlaped. All shrubs were 2-5 gallon size.

Later the high school principal presented each student with a special certificate of merit at the annual FFA awards banquet for outstanding achievement in landscaping and a job well done. The school district administration and school board have given the horticulture program and the Denton FFA the opportunity to do the landscaping of all new schools built in the future. *(Jay Martin, Advisor)*

From front to back are Tabetha Bush, Robert Row and Steve Robinson, planting Japanese ligustrums at the school.

Park Plan Pays Off

Here's how our Lake City, Arkansas, recreational park came to be.

The chapter president and BOAC chairman met with the city council at the

October meeting and explained to the council the FFA plans for a park. The council appropriated $2,200. The chapter then got bids on 29 yards of concrete for a 60-foot by 35-foot basketball court. The chapter leveled the lot, built the forms and poured the concrete. We then painted the free throw lines and boundary lines before putting up the goals. This phase of the project cost approximately $1,800.

Our next phase was to finish a baseball field that was started some years ago but never completed. The chapter leveled the field and constructed much needed bleachers. The baseball field and basketball court, as a result of our chapter work, will soon have lights so games can be played at night.

Upon completion of the project the chapter did some landscaping on the park. Benjie Barnes, chapter secretary, did radio shows on various local stations to help publicize the project. The Jonesboro Sun newspaper carried two stories about the project during the three-month construction. When the park was completed, Keith Marshall, BOAC chairman, presented the city council and the mayor with a certificate of appreciation. *(Eric Grimes, President)*

FFA Causes Quite A Bang at Home Games

Members of Scott City, Kansas, FFA promote school spirit at home high school football games by firing a cannon after every touchdown. *(Darin Hoover, Reporter)*

A Farm Family's Fun

The common expression "just horsing around" comes very close to explaining Jeff Riley's life. Horses play an important role for this 17-year-old FFA'er from Farmington, Kentucky.

Jeff spends most of his time feeding, doctoring and supervising his cattle; he also feeds out hogs, ships boars and sows, works in the fields, and still has time to custom break and train several horses. Jeff's favorite project is his horses. Jeff entered vocational agriculture four years ago to improve his knowledge of agriculture and join the Future Farmers of America, just as his older brothers and sisters had done. Jeff was named outstanding Greenhand and Chapter Star Farmer and served as the chapter president.

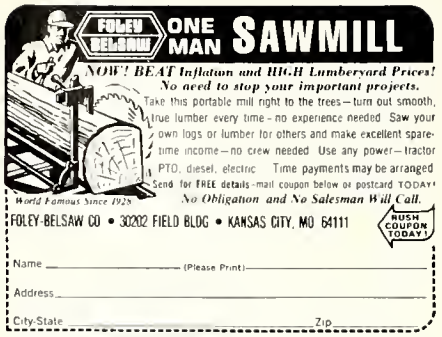
Jeff wants to become a veterinarian. He is one of six Riley children—two older brothers who are in the family partnership and three sisters who help in operating the 800-acre spread. His mom, like most moms, is also involved as she serves as chief cook, bookkeeper and organizer. About his dad, after whom Jeffery Marvin is named, Jeff says, "My father at the age of 43, runs the farm, auctions two cattle sales and buys cattle and hogs by order on a daily basis for feedlots and packing houses. My father's love for horses was the spark that got me and my brothers started in racing horses."

Jeff and his family have recently expanded their horse program to include running quarter horses. Jeff's favorite is Ascention, a three-year-old filly with a 98 speed index, which is a top AAA American Quarter Horse Association Rating.

Although Jeff's family has always had horses on the farm, his dad says, "This horse racing is something for my entire family to enjoy. We now all share a common interest. When we win we celebrate and when we lose we work harder, together. It used to be on Sunday afternoons we all went our separate ways—to the baseball field, watched TV, slept, or just ran around; now, we all load up and head for the brush track to watch our horses run. We also get to take off for a couple of days and go to an official race in Springfield or DuQuion. This is a family project and has brought us all closer together. *(Susan Shaeffer, Reporter)*

ACTION LINES ► ► ►

- Offer to care for the plants in the county office building.
- Start a Christmas tree plot now for future year's fund raising efforts.
- Operate the pick-your-own apple operation for a local grower.
- Wash the Alumni donated van.
- Take your banker with you to the contest.
- Volunteer to your chapter president to be a chairman.
- Send a funny joke to *The National FUTURE FARMER.*
- Challenge the Alumni in a showmanship contest.
- Be sure your chapter says thank you to the secretary in the principal's office.
- Gift idea for your advisor—FFA watch.
- Invite the football coach to the chapter banquet.
- Prepare fresh flower arrangements for the school library.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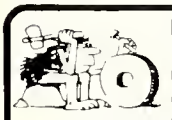
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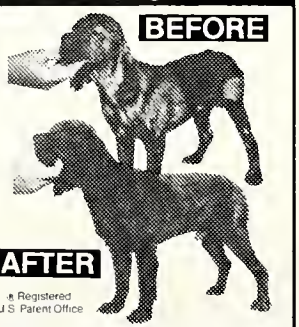

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The Joke Page

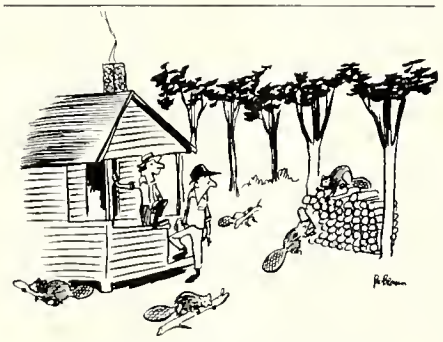
One day the Tomato family went for a walk. Mama and Papa Tomato walked briskly along, but had to keep calling for Junior to quit dawdling. Finally, Papa Tomato became very angry with Junior, strode back to him and stomped on him. *"Now,"* Papa shouted, *"ketchup."*

Lynette Howard
Snowflake, Arizona

There was a small church that stood along the banks of a small river. One Sunday the preacher was just about to start when this drunk came in and sat down in the back of the church. The preacher saw him and started a fiery sermon. He said, *"If I had all of the wine, beer and liquor in the world, I would pour them into this river."*

The drunk stood up and started singing, *"Shall we gather at the river?"*

Randy Capps
Washburn, Tennessee



"Training them was well worth the time and trouble."

The trouble with being a good sport is that you have to lose to prove it.

Rod Vogel
Bloomville, Ohio

Claude was the only one in his town to catch any fish. People would sit on the lake for hours but didn't catch a single fish. But every single day Claude would drive up with a whole truckload. So one day the people called the fish and game warden. He was there the next day and he went fishing with Claude. They got out in the middle of the lake and Claude pulled out a stick of dynamite and lit it and threw it out in the middle of the lake. When it exploded the catfish started floating to the top of the lake. The warden started screaming that it was illegal so Claude lit another one and handed it to the warden. The warden persisted that it was illegal. Claude said, *"Are you going to keep talking or fish?"*

Mark Weber
Lake Elsinore, California

An old man went into a church while the preacher was in the middle of a sermon and asked the man beside him, *"How long has he been preaching?"*

The man said, *"About 28 years."*

The old man reckoned, *"Well, guess I'll stay. He should be about through."*

Mike Melton
Albany, Kentucky

A castaway was captured by some cannibals. Each day they would puncture his arm and drink his blood. Finally, he called for the chief. *"Look, Buster, kill me and eat me if you want to, but I'm getting tired of getting stuck for the drinks."*

Paul Doll
Kintyre, North Dakota

Q: What is red and green and goes 300 mph?

A: A frog in a blender.

That last joke was so old, the first time I heard it, the Dead Sea wasn't even sick.

Todd Brown
Ramseur, North Carolina

Drivers of small cars have to make quick decisions—like which tail pipe to go up when the truck ahead of them makes a sudden stop.

Craig Schneider
Columbia City, Indiana

The laziest man I ever saw was Will Knot. Instead of writing his name, he wrote "Won't."

Gary Mote
Wilburton, Oklahoma

Trudy's father walks into the kitchen and finds his post card that he got from his brother full of sticky peanut butter and jelly sandwich. He runs into the next room to Trudy and yells, *"Have you been playing with this post card your uncle sent?"*

Trudy: *"Yes, why?"*

Father: *"Well, I wanted to show it to Reverend Thatchlamb. And you ought to know we can't show a filthy post card to the reverend."*

Cheri Bernier
Weston, Oregon

Joe: *"What do you get if you cross 25 buck deer with 25 sows?"*

Brian: *"I don't know."*

Joe: *"Fifty sows and bucks."*

Sandy Stroud
Midland, Ohio

Q: What do you get when you cross a giant with a skunk?

A: A big stink.

Michael Mattson
Stanberry, Missouri

Charlie, the Greenhand

"I've got collateral...see those gold teeth?"

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